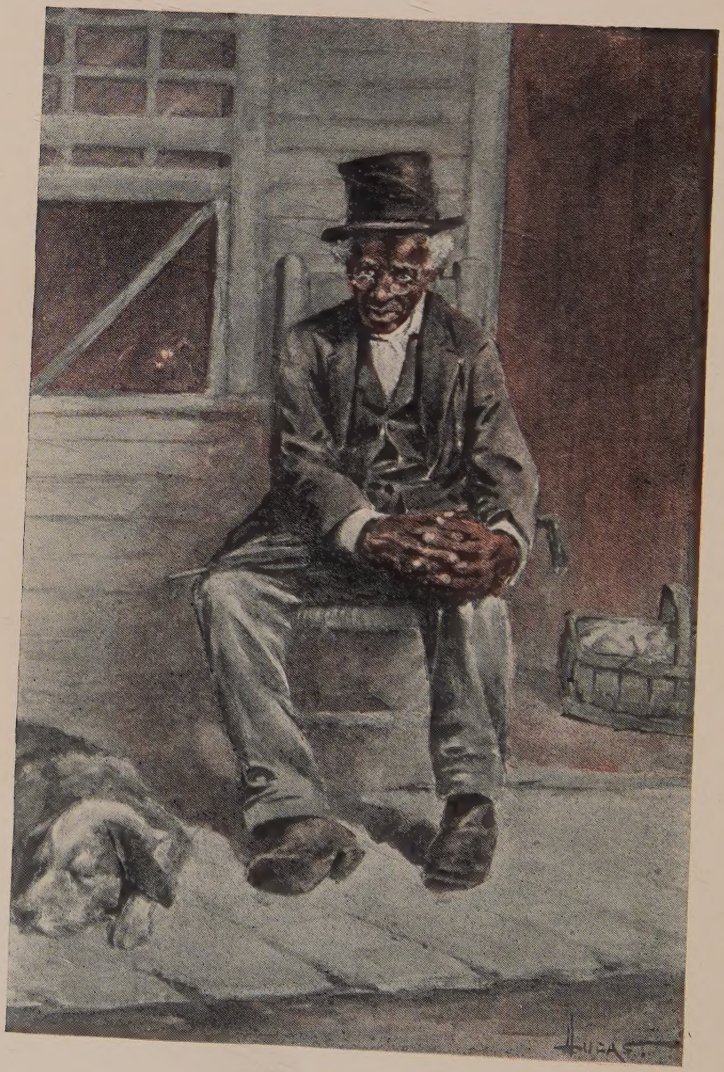
UNCLE WASH
HIS STORIES

JOHN TROTWOOD MOORE

"A little fun is beneficial"

Sam Nixon



Uncle Wash.

UNCLE WASH

HIS STORIES

BY

JOHN TROTWOOD MOORE

AUTHOR OF

"The Bishop of Cottontown," "A Summer Hymnal," "Ole Mistis," "The Old Cotton Gin," Etc.

ILLUSTRATED

PHILADELPHIA

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FOREWORD

THE author's own part in this book has not been so much to create as to transcribe. The effort was not great and the art of it—if it can be said to rise to that dignity—makes no pretense.

In a more or less strenuous literary life, these stories have come into existence at intervals; and the writing of them, it may as well be admitted, is in response to that spirit of fun which is the birth inheritance of every healthy Aryan claiming that slope in his land that lay toward the sunrise of the Celt. To the author these stories have been a mental unbottling. It is true he had many other ways of mental amusement—the little mare and the runabout, the colts in the pasture, the pacing race at the County Fair, the stubble-field in the fall, and Bob White flushed between wooded blue grass hills—these are not to be underestimated when play was needed for the body.

The stories of Uncle Wash have been his play of the mind.

With this he bequeaths them to the world. And he will be repaid if there shall be the shifting of its mental burden with a laugh.

Like Lord Byron, Uncle Wash could not tell a story that had not really happened. The chief incidents of all of these stories are true.

Chief among the tenets of that broader religion of

to-day is that which recognizes the rights of laughter—that the soul, if it stands under the great burden of this age of effort, needs no less the smile for its journey than the body needs its newer religion of sun-light and air.

J. T. M.

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SIS CA'LINE'S ENTICEMENT

WHEN I get particularly blue, when life becomes a burden and there seem to be more valleys of gloom in the world than sunshiny hilltops, I send for Uncle Wash. In a limited sense, I may as well admit, the old darky is my partner. He lives in a little cabin on my place and raises turkeys and pigs for me, as he expresses it, "on de sheers." It is true, when the dividing time comes, my part of the turkeys has generally died of the "limber neck" and my pigs have gone the cholera route to that bourne so often mentioned. But I believe in the old man, and his solemn explanation, when I call for a division, that "dat am de dispensashun uv proverdence, sah, so fur as yo' part am consarned," is, to be sure, very comforting and helpful. Perhaps the truth is, I love the old man for his quaint, inexhaustible fund of mirth-producing stories, and the fact that he is the last leaf upon the tree of a civilization that has passed away forever.

In truth, the old man is *different.* Body servant of a distinguished Southern gentleman, and associating with the best there was of the Old South, he had absorbed much, both of mannerism and of life, that the common field negro of his race knew not of. He is *different*—a type that has passed—but a quaint mirror of the rare old times that passed with him.

And so the old man and I jog along in this one-sided partnership—this partnership wherein I fall heir to the

debit and he to the credit account of the ledger, until death shall come in and wind it up forever.

Perhaps, too, I know that the account is not always against me; for many of his quaint old stories of ante-bellum days, of chivalrous men and beautiful women, of a civilization as proud, gentle and refined as the world has ever known, linger with me in my working hours, and easily offset the losses from the turkey crop and the pig failure.

"Now I want the best you've got," I said to him the other night, "and spin it out as long as you please—for I want to laugh till bedtime."

"To be sho', to be sho'," said the old man, thoughtfully, as he lit his pipe and adjusted the copper wire he always wore around his neck for the rheumatism. "Did I ever tell you 'bout de enticement uv Sister Ca'line Hunter?"

But I knew the old man's ways, and that I was not expected to answer that question. So I merely lit my cigar, snuffed out the taper against the mantle, before which we sat facing a blazing hickory fire, and said nothing.

"Sister Ca'line was a grass widder," went on the old man, "and I tells you right now, dat whenever a man hooks up wid er grass widder an' den specs ter git off wid sumpin' mor'n a blind bridle on, all I's got ter say is, he's struck er mighty cold wind in de back stretch fur er fas' mile.

"It was in de Krismus times uv forty-fo' an', kordin' to my custom, I had saunt my wife Dinah down inter Giles County ter see her mother. I's

bin marrid meny years, an' I's allers made it a pint ter sen' my wife off at least once a year fur de benefit uv my health," he winked. "Sum say de way fur er man to enjoy puffeck health am ter take callermul in de spring-time an' er outin' in de fawl; but de bes' thing I urver foun' fur my 'tickler constertushun am to let my wife, Dinah, take bofe de callermul and de outin', an' kinder leave me free ter circumnavigate de high seas uv matrimonial konsolashun, an' look arter de widders uv de church, es St. Paul enjines us decuns ter do.

"So es soon es I got Dinah off, for de benefit uv my health, es I was sayin', I 'lowed ter give er party fur two, an' ax Sis' Ca'line Hunter; but dat very night I tuck sick wid whut dey all thort wus yaller fever. But when Br'er Mixpill Johnson cum an' look at me, he say, 'No,' sez he, 'you ain't got yaller fever, but you is got black fever, an' you's got it mighty bad, an' ef you don't send fur Sis' Ca'line Hunter to nuss you 'twell Sis' Dinah cum home, you gwin'ter die an' die mighty hard!'

"Now, Sis' Ca'line, she wus er mighty 'ligus 'oman—mighty 'ligus. Allers talkin' 'bout bein' 'perpared fur de summons,' an' 'ready to go when de wurd wus given', an' 'wearin' de robe uv white fur de comin' uv de angel,' an' 'listenin' fur de toot uv de horn,' an' all dat. But when she cum in, thinkin' I had yaller fever, she jes' did squeeze into de door an' tuck her seat 'way off in de corner, an' sot dar lookin' at me wid one uv dose furerway 'ligus looks, sorter lak she was Moses an' I was de promised land! Lor', but ain't er grass

widder on to de gait uv dis wurl? She jes' sot dar sateful lak, an' ax me how I felt, an' ef I wus perpared ef de angul called, an' ef I felt de 'proach uv eny black shadders, an' all that. But I knowed how ter manage dat, and I sez:

" 'Sister Ca'line, de 'proach uv de black shadder am jes' whut I's longin' fur. Can't you move up yur cheer er leetle closer? It strikes me dat fur er 'oman es 'ligus es you is, you certinly am mo' feerd uv death den enybody I ever seed!'

"She seed I wus onter her game, an' she laf an' say: 'O, Br'er Washington, you so sateful!' But she focht her cheer up all de same, an' I hed jes' got her leetle han' in mine, an' wus axin' her ef she wouldn't be a sister to me whilst Dinah wus away, when who should walk in but ole Parson Whooploud, an' den an' dar he 'cuse me uv de enticement uv Sister Ca'line Hunter!

"Den Sis' Ca'line she tuck to weepin' an' wailin', an' de parson he 'lowed he gwine bring de whole thing up fo' de church, 'sides sendin' er speshul messenger arter Dinah. Up to dat time, sah, I don't think I had eny fever; but when I heurn dat news my pulse went up to one hundred an' forty in de shade, an' den I seed dat I'd played on a ten-ter-one shot an' lost all 'cept my honor.

"But de naixt day de parson cum 'round an' 'lowed dat he'd bin prayin' over de thing, an' axin' fur heavenly guidance, an' dat de missionary society wus er leetle short uv funds, an' dat ten dollars on my part would he'p oil de machinery uv de church mightily, an' go er long way t'word easin' de conscience uv de

saints; an' dat ef it wan't forthcomin' at once, he reckon' things 'ud hafter be 'lowed ter take dar cou'se, includin' de speshul messenger fur Dinah.

"Wal, sah, it tuck all my 'tater crap, but dat wus better'n Dinah gettin' holt uv it an' takin' all my ha'r!

"But it didn't end dar; in erbout er week he cum over an' say dat he dun prayed fur heavenly guidance ergin, an' hit seem ter be de dispensashun uv proverdence dat de way uv de transgressor am hard, but bein' as how de fund fur super-numerous preachers wus mighty low it would take erbout five dollars to ease up de conscience uv de church on dat p'int! Dat tuck all my terbacco crop, an' I say ter myse'f, sez I,'fur ever' ounce uv fun er man has in dis wurl, he pays er pound uv penetence!

"Wal, sah, you think dat ole hypercrite didn't cum over ergin next week, an' talk erbout de conscience uv de church bein' so hurt dat nuffin' but my silver watch 'ud ease it? Den de naixt thing dat went to po' oil on de troubled waters wus de speckled shote, an' den, arter he dun got all he cu'd, an' me so skeered all de time I cu'dn't sleep fur fear it 'ud git out, I hope I may die ef he didn't have me read out in de church fur de enticement uv Sister Ca'line, ennyhow!

"Wal, I seed de only thing I cu'd do wus to go dar an' make a clean breast uv it. I know'd I hadn't done nuffin' wrong, nur Sister Ca'line, neether, an' hit gin ter dawn on me dat sumtimes de false proffits uv dis wurl has a way uv playin' on de conscience uv fools in de name uv de church fur de benefit uv dey own pockets. But all dis time I manage ter keep de proceedin's frum

Dinah by sendin' her wurd ever' day, an' tellin' her uv my undyin' luv, an' how me an' de chillun wus jes pinin' fur de sight uv her. Ef you want ter keep yo' wife away all winter," winked the old man, "jes' make her b'leeve you can't git erlong widout her, dat de unerverse done stop waggin' sense she left, an' dat whut 's left uv it am er black an' dismul void. Dar's lot uv human nacher in de best uv wimmin' an' dey mighty nigh sho' ter be allers anx'us to gin you jes' whut you don't want.

"So Dinah jes' saunt me back de wurd dat she wus havin' a mighty good time down dar in er distracted meetin', an' fur me ter take keer uv de chilluns an' behave myself. An' dat wus one time dat I prayed dat dat distracted meetin' might go over twell July, bringin' in de sheaves ripe onto de harvest. Wal, sah, es I thort, de parson soon let it all out, an' my miz'ry commenced. I orter made a clean breast uv it at fust, an' faced de music. But I's allers noticed dat a fool allers does in de end whut de wise man do in de beginin'. Ef you sow tho'ns you better be keerful ter wear your brogans!

"Dar wan't er nigger on de place wid blue gums in his head an' chicken feathers in his hair dat wan't too much uv er gentleman ter speak ter me. Ole Sis' Sally Ann, dat I hugged twell she wus too ole ter be huggable, 'fused ter speak ter me. An' Betsy, de yaller gal in de house, dat I kissed from Genesis to Revelashuns, turned up her nose at Sis' Ca'line. Ole Br'er Peter, dat hed stole all ole marster's hams, dat fawl, hilt a special prayer meetin' fur my convershun, an' Parson Whoop-loud cu'dn't hear my name widout crossin' hisse'f,

spittin' twice in a cross-mark in de road, an' sayin' de Lord's prayer back'ards to keep off devils. An' all uv 'em sed I wus a walkin' pesthouse, an' a pair uv Sodums an' Gomorrers in brogans.

"'Dis am a queer ole wurl,' soliloquized the old man, 'allers ready to giv de glad hand to de devil in disguise, an' de marble heart to de angul wid a spot on his gyarments. Born a fraud, mankind luvs ter be humbugged. Ef you wanter work 'im you must flatter 'im, an' ef you wanter use 'im, you must fool 'im, and if you wanter skin 'im you must jine his church an' call 'im 'brother.

"But all dat time I was sendin' luv messages ter Dinah an' hopin' sumpin' would break de connecshun in de grapevine telegraph 'twixt me an' Giles County.

"Wal, sah, I don't kno' whut I'd done ef Marse Henry hadn't cum home frum college 'bout dat time. He wus erbout seventeen years old, an' es full uv mischeef as he cu'd be. Did you urver kno' dat boy, Marse Henry Young?"

"Not the present judge of the Supreme Court?" I asked.

"De same—de same. Allers brainy an' full uv mischeef, an' de best lawyer ter gin advice in a close place I urver seed.

"'Wash,' he say, when I tole 'im, 'you am er' ole fool an' no mistake. But ever'body learns to shave on a fool's beard, an' it's good for you. All men are divided into two classes, de caught an' de oncaught. Now, you jes' go over to de church meetin', hold your tongue, look pius an' penertent, an' leav de rest ter me.

Befo' I'm through wid 'em you will find out dat a man ain't no wussern his neighbor, arter all.'

"Wal, sah, when de night cum fur de trial uv my decunship an' de enticement uv Sis' Ca'line, ever'body wus dar' cept Dinah, thank de Lord. Sis' Ca'line wus dar in mournin' fur her first husband, er man dat hed bin mighty nigh ter me—mighty nigh. She had on her white cap an' kep' er white handkercher up ter her eyes mighty nigh all de time, an' kerried a bottle uv hartshorn an' bear's oil in her han' ter be handy when she fainted. Two sisterin stood on each side uv her ter be reddy to hold her when she keeled over. All de sisterin wus mo' or less round her, fannin' her when she looked faintyfied an' sayin', 'Po', innercent angul!' ever'time she'd weep. But na'ar one uv 'em ever cum nigh me! 'But dat's alright', sez I ter myse'f, 'dat's one uv de ways uv de wurl; an' whenever de devil weeps an' say he sorry dar's allers sum fool ready ter wanter lend 'im a pair uv angels' wings!

"Den dey had a long prayer in which Br'er Whoop-loud pertishuned de throne uv grace, most sarchin'ly, not ter visit de wrath uv Sodum an' Gomorrer on de whole church an' kommunity bekase uv one reperbate, but to spar him bekase uv de yudder hundred or mo' saints, dat allers walked in de true way an' lived in de light an' wus so pius an' good dey only need assenshun robes an' er gentle lift ter go right up to glory!

"Den dey all sung:

"'While de light holds out ter burn,
De vilest sinner may return.'"

"Den my miz'ry commence sho' 'nuff; for while dey sing dis, de way dey piled hit onter me wus scan'lus. Dey formed er ring an' walked all roun' me, singin', an' ever' now an' den sum ole sister 'ud look over at me an' say: 'Po' sinner, better cum to de cross!' An' ernur'r one would crane her ole neck, an' say: 'Heaben he'p his ole sateful heart!' An' er young black buxum sister 'ud eye me sorty diserp'intedly an' say: 'Mussy me, but I nurver 'spected it wus in 'im!' Den dey would all git roun' Sis' Ca'line an' say: 'Po', soiled dove, dat flew inter de nest uv de fowler!'

"But wusser miz'ry wus in sto' for me when Br'er Whooploud riz ter preach his sermon on my sins. He tuck fur his text: 'An' de devil tempted de proffit in de wilderness, an' de wolf enticed de lamb frum de fol'.' An' den he lit onter me in a way dat 'ud shake de faith uv Moses. De gist uv it all wus dat I wus wussern de devil hisse'f, an' when he got on dat subject he sho' did make it hot. You'd er thort de devil wus right dar in dat house, an' he preached' bout 'im so you cud smell de brimstone es fur away es de back benches, whilst he made it so hot it actually singed de hair on de heads uv de niggers in de front pews. He preached an' he preached, an' when he wound up he sez: 'Brudderin', dar ain't but one thing left ter do, an' dat is fur de devil ter cum in an' claim his own!'

"Now, boss, you kno' er nigger jes' nachully b'leeves in de devil, an' dat he am er bein', walkin' an' prowlin' round o' nights, seekin' fur bad niggers lak er sheep-killin' dorg fur black sheep. An' dis sermun had 'em worked up to de right pitch fur de thing dat cum next.

Dem words wan't no mor'n outen 'at preacher's mouf befo' dar wus a great kommoshun in de church do', an' er deep voice, lak outer a yearlin' ca'f, sed:

" 'Yas, an' I's er-comin'!' An', fo' dey all know'd it, in walked de devil, sho' nuff, lookin' turrible in de dim light uv de one candle in de church, but fetchin' erlong his pitchfork, an' his horns an' hoof an' forked tail, an' he wus a blowin' smoke frum his eyes an' mouf an' nose. He locked de only do' behind 'im es he cum an' walked right up to de pulpit. Bre'r Whooploud wus in it, but he never stop to 'spute de quallerfacashuns uv de candidate, nur de p'int uv possesshun, nur ter give 'im de right hand uv fellership. He jus' looked at de devil once, his ole eyes bulged out, an' lit up lak er oyster sign in a black night, an' es he jumped fur de winder he yelled: 'Lord, save me, a miserbul sinner!'

"Boss, you've heurn tell uv de devil breakin' loose in Georgy, but ef you'd bin dar dat night you'd er seen 'im in Tennessee. Men fainted, wimmen hed fits, an' de chilluns jes' went inter er kommertose state an' stayed dar. Dem dat wan't so badly paralyzed dey cu'd use dey legs, made a rush fur de only winder in the house. But ole Aunt Fat Fereby, dat weighed fo' hundred an' sixty pounds, who happen to be settin' next to it, got dar fust an' started through without calculatin' on de rotundity uv her corporosity. Of course, she got stuck betwixt de jice an' de winder sill, an' shut off de air an' de exit at de same time. An' dar she stuck wid her legs flyin' lak windmills, an' tryin' ter kick de roof offen de house, go through or bust!

"But de devil wus mighty quiet lak, 'cept he kept blowin' smoke frum his eyes an' mouf an' nose. We cu'dn't see 'im good, es he sot dar in de pulpit in de shadder, but he did look nachul, ter be sho', an' I 'lowed ter myself it wan't de fust time he'd bin in de pulpit. Den he lifted a voice lak a yearlin' ca'f ergin an' sed:

" 'I's cum fur my reckonin'. Enybody dat moves or tells me a lie will die. Render unter me de reckurd uv yo' transgresshuns as I p'int my pitchfork at you.'

"Den he p'inted his pitchfork at Br'er Whooploud de fus' one, an' looked at 'im wid his turrible eyes, an' ole Br'er Whooploud groveled on de floor, an' cried: 'Marse Devil, hav mussy on me! I'm a chicken thief, a blackmailer an' a hypercrite, an' I's hugged ever' widder in de church.'

"Den he p'inted his pitchfork at Betsy Ann, an' she tole how she'd stole ole Mistis' yaller bowl an' teaspoons an' ever'thing else she cu'd git. Ole Aunt Sally Ann 'fessed up an' sed she wus too mean ter liv, dat she'd run off wid ernur'r 'oman's husband frum Ferginy. At dis ole Aunt Polly chimed in an' sed: 'Marse Devil, I ain't nurver dun nothin' much meaner'n stealin' cold vittles frum de white folks, but I's bound ter 'fess I's bin in sum mighty tight places whar I didn't hav de grace ter git out easy!'

" 'Dat's me—dat's me, now!' " shouted ole Aunt Fat Fereby, 'es her legs still flew 'round an' 'round dat winder sill. Even Sis' Ca'line 'fessed up an' sed she'd cum over ter my house dat night to entice me, but I'd got dar fust.

"Wal, sah, when he made 'em all 'fess up but me, he shook his pitchfork 'round his head, sloshed his tail, an' sed: 'But fur one godly, innercent man in dis here den uv sinners, I'd take you all wid me ter-night. Br'er Washington,' he say, 'stan' up an' show 'em de face uv er hones' man!'

"Den es I riz de devil walked out jes' lak he cum in, an' when he wus gone, I tell you, boss, dey cum mighty nigh settin' me up an' worshippin' me, es dey did de golden ca'f uv ole. Dey 'lected me Pas' Gran' Marster uv Righteousness, Keeper uv de Seal uv Faith, an' Holder uv all de Excheckers Widders dat cum inter de church.

"An' dar wan't a chicken missin' on dat plantashun fur er year!

"De next day me an' Marse Henry went fishin' an' when our boat wus way up de lake I la'f an'say ter him:

"Marse Henry, jes' tell me how in de wurl you done it!"

"Marse Henry la'f an' say: 'Easy ernuff,' sez he; 'dem horns an' hoof an' tail you'll fin' up in de tan-house lof' on de raw-hide uv de red yellin' calf. An' all dat smoke wus jes' er good cigar I wus smokin' under dat ole dough-face. No', sez he, 'all mankind am divided into two classes—de caught an' de on-caught. De next time don't you git caught,' and he flung out his line an' pulled in a speckled trout. Arter a while he sez:

" 'But, Wash, did you see de Whooploud's eyes?' An' den we bofe laugh twell dat boat lakter turned over in dat lake."

BR'ER WASHINGTON'S CONSOLATION

"Sat'day night my wife died,
Sunday she was buried,
Monday was my kotin' day
And Chewsday I got married."

WHENEVER I heard the old man singing I knew he was in a reminiscent mood and so I put down my book and went out to the barn, where he was building a pen to put the fattening Berkshires in. For a month these slick rascals had been running in the ten-acre lot planted in corn and, at the "lay-by plowing," sown in peas, all for their especial benefit. The corn had nearly ripened and the peas were in the pod; and now, day after day they had wallowed in the water of the ten-acre field branch or torn down the tempting corn stalks or eaten the juicy peas till their tails had taken on the two-ring curl of contentment and they had grown too fat to run in so large a lot.

"An' now dey must be put in de parlor," said the old man as he proceeded to build their pen, "an' fed on variashun cake an' punkins. Fust er good dry pen, bilt on er solid blue lime-rock, ef you so forchewnate es to live in Middle Tennessee, an' ef you don't live heah," he half soliloquized, "jes' bild it in sum mud hole an' be dun wid it, fur you ain't gwin'ter fatten your horgs nohow ef you don't live in Tennessee," he said, with a sly wink. "Den, arter you gits the pen bilt, bring up a

load uv yaller punkins to sharpen up dey appletights an' start 'em off right; den plenty uv dis year's cohn wid er sour-meal mash ever' now and den to keep 'em eatin' good, an' den, chile, 'long erbout Krismus time jes' set your mouf fur spareribs an' sawsages—e—yum, yum, yum"—and he wiped the corner of his mouth suspiciously."

"Ole Naper cum to my house
I thout he cum to see me,
But when I cum to find him out,
He's 'swade my wife to leave me,"

he sang again. "I'll tell you, sah," he laughed, "I can't see what fatnin' horgs hes got to do with marryin', but dat's what de aixpectashuns uv dis horg-pen remin's me uv ennyway—'bout de time I was kotin' Unk Peter's widder, way back in fifty-fo'," he added reflectively, "an' de hard time I had gettin' eny konsolashun from dat ar 'oman. I tell you, sah, it ain't easy to git eny konsolashun from er widder—not nigh es easy es it am frum er gal. Huh!" he ejaculated, derisively, "folks say it am, an' dat all widders jes' watchin' out fur er chance to git marrid ergin, but you jes' try to git er widder to say 'yas'—she'll jes' play erroun' an' play erroun' de hook, and fus' thing you know she's off, an' dar you looks an' lo!—dun swallered de bait yo'se'f."

"Befo' my wife died," said the old man, as he ran his thumb down his hatchet-blade, "I useter think I'd nuvver wanter git marrid eny mo', an' I had de mos'

dispizerble contemplashuns fur dese ole fools dat go rippin' erroun', dyein' dey ha'r an' writin' poltry to de moon befo' dey fus' wife's feet git cold good! Hit's all right fur er young man to do dat—he jes' nacherly jucy an' he can't he'p hisself. But dese ole fools whut de hot sun uv matremony dun dried up, an' de trials of chillun-raisin' dun tuck de foolishnes' outen 'em an' monkey-shines uv mothers-in-law dun kill 'em in de home-stretch—I tell you, sah, when I see sech men as dese, dat has passed fur forty-odd years as sober, senserbul men in de kommunity whar dey lives, all at onct begin to git gay an' boyish ergin, er snortin' in de valley an' er clothin' dey neck wid thunder, an' er hollerin' kerhonk, kerhonk, kerhonk to de captins, an' er shoutin', an' er gwine 'round wantin' to fight de man-in-de-moon 'kase he happen to peep into dey lady-luv's winder, it jes' makes me wanter go 'round de barn an' hug sum ole gray mule fur konsolashun!

"Whenever er ole man's luv begins to take on er secon' growth, it am den dat de anguls in heaven perpares to shed dey tears. Why, sah, I's seed ole fellers hav rumertizn an' hart-failure so bad dey cudn't creep to dey fus' wife's fun'ral, but de naixt time I'd see 'em, Gord bless yo' soul, honey, dey be runnin' erroun' at sum pickernick, fetchin' water frum de spring ever' five minutes fur sum sixteen-year-ole gal, cuttin' watermilions fur her, an' tryin' to meander off in de shady woods and pull up all de hart's-ease dat grows in er ten-acre woods lot! De rumertizn all gone, ter-be-sho', and de hart-failure dun turned into head failure, bless de Lawd!

"Dat's whut I thout, sah, but bless yo' soul, honey, my wife hadn't bin dead er week befo' I got up one mornin' an' all onbeknownst to myself I foun' myself blackin' my shoes! Cudn't he'p it to save my life, sah—jes' had to do it. De naixt day, sah, 'tirely unbeknownst to de state ov my naturality, I kotch myself in de act uv puttin' h'ar-oil on my hair, cinnermun-draps on my handkerchief, an' pullin' off de eel-skin gyarters I dun bin wearin' forty years fur de rumertizn. No mo' rumertizn fur me; er man nurver hes rumertizn arter his wife dies—leastwise," he whispered, knowingly, "not twell he marries ergin an' den he hes it so bad he can't cut stove-wood fur her."

"In er week dis' zeeze tuck me so komplementry I 'gun ter roach up de ole muel, fix up de buggy, an' whitewash de cabin. Dese am allers de fus' simptums, sah. I's knowed sum ole fellers to make dey house go widout paint fur forty years, but jes' es soon es dey wife dies, jes' watch 'em an' see ef de fus' thing dey don't do am to paint up dat ole house lak dey tryin' to ketch er angul—huh! better had er painted it er leetle fur de fus' po angul arter dey fooled her inter hit!

"But de simptums come on me, sah, thick an' fas', an' fore goodness, sah, by Sunday I had it so bad it broke out in spots all over me, wid gradual risin' uv de temperchewin', dryness in de region uv de salvashun glands, an' complete p'ralersis uv de pizzerrinctum uv de sense-bumps! Gord, boss, I was mighty nigh insenserbul!

"It all seemed lak er dream to me, an' I can't tell 'zactly whut I did do. I seemed ter be walkin' in er

gyarden whar golden roses bloomed on peppermint candy vines, an' coon-dorgs wid diamon' eyes wus treein' solid silver 'possums up in de 'simmon trees!

"I tell you, Marse John, I wanted to marry! An' de fus' thing I knowed, me an' dat ole muel wus gwine in a peert trot up de road t'words de cabin uv Sister Ca'line Jones, Unk Peter Jones' widder. I felt sorter mean, an' I disremember sayin' to myself: '*Heah, you go, Wash, arter all yore good revolushuns, de biggest fool in de ban' waggin.*' As I rid off, I seed dat young mischeevus Mistis uv mine, Miss Charlotte, God bless her! —an' she called out to me kinder mad lak, an' sed: 'Unkle Wash, I think it's a shame you ain't put on moanin' for Aunt Peggy. The way you are dressed, ennybody'd think you are gwine to er ball!'

" 'Lor' bless your sweet soul, Miss Charlotte,' sez I, 'don't hav ter put on moanin' lak de white folks; it am already dar, an' mo' dan skin deep, too,' I sez. 'I bin moanin' for Peggy ever sense I marrid 'er,' I sed, 'an' now is my time for rejicement, Miss Charlotte, an' I gwin'ter rejice. 'Sides dat,' I sed, 'whilst I's moanin', all my things gwine to rack, an' de chillun's got nobody to take keer uv 'em an' sumpin' nuther sho' gwin'ter happen, Miss Charlotte.'

"Miss Charlotte bleege to laf, an' old Marster he spoke up an' say, 'Let 'im erlone, Charlotte. Can't you see de ole fool has got it? Go on, you ole idjut,' he sed to me, 'an' marry sumbody an' git back heah termorrer wid enuf sense in yo' haid to run er straight furrer fer de fall plowin'.' An' wid dat I lit out.

"Now, Unk Pete an' me, sah," he explained,

"belong to de same church—de Candle Light—an' to de same lodge—de Ainshunt an' Honorbul Order uv de Bow-legged Sons uv de Black Cat—an' 'course I ain' gwi' marry his widder now an' spile sum moral obser-vashun, so I jes' stopped at his cabin to git his consent fur me to marry his widder.

"Get his consent?" I asked. "Why how could you get his consent if he was dead?"

"Who sed he wus dead?" said the old darky, quickly. "I nurver sed so; I sed she wus his widder!"

I tried to explain to him that a man couldn't have a widow unless he were dead, but this only made him throw back his head and laugh heartily.

"Wal, wal, wal, white folks got such curious ways uv thinkin'. Who'd urver thout it? You see," he said very solemnly and impressively, "It wus dis way: Unk Peter wus gittin' ole, an' went off contra-wise to de doctrine an' marrid dis young 'oman. Furst thing he know, he waked up sum mohnin' an' find hisself de father uv ten chilluns, sum uv 'em his'n an' sum uv 'em her'n, by her fus' husban', an' dar he wus gittin' so ole he cudn't s'port 'em. So up he jumps an' at de naixt meetin' uv de church he runs fer de offis uv Patr'ark uv Santerfercashun, which, 'kordin, to de doctrine uv Hollerness, marrid 'im to de church. 'Course arter Unk Pete gits santerfercashun an' marrid to de church, he cudn't hav eny uder wife, so he hafter put Sis Ca'line an' de chilluns aside, which made all uv dem de widders uv de church. Don't you ketch on to de doctrine, suh?"

I told him I caught.

The old man was silent as if in deep thought. Then he said: "I wus young den, an' bleeved ever'thing erbout de church an' de doctrine I ever heurd, smelt or dreamed, but I am older now, an' I's cum to de pinted konklushun dat when er man or er 'oman gets santerfercashun, one or two things done happen to' em: Either de fiahs uv youth dun played out in de bilers uv dar natral swashun—de ole Adam in 'em jes' peg out from ole aige—or else dey am layin' low, Br'er 'Possum, fur de slickes' game dat ever wus played. I's kinder notis'd we all nacherly gits better es we gits older, enyway, an' when we gits so ole we can't sin no mo', we mighty nigh good-fur-nuffin'. An' dars whar de patr'arks uv ole had it on to de res' uv us," said the old man knowingly. "Jes' let de good Marster let me live heah erbout seben hundred years longer, an' jes' watch me set back an' view unconserned de fleetin' vanerties uv dis life.

"Br'er Peter wus in deep prayer when I rid up to his cabin, an' arter he riz up from his knees he blessed on de top uv my observashun, giv me de grip uv de Ainshunt an' Honorbul Order uv de Bowlegged Sons uv de Black Cat, an' 'lowed he'd lak ter tak off my sandals an' wash my feet; but I tole 'im I jes' wash 'em 'bout er month befo' an' didn't hav no time fur foolishness; dat I cum to dis cabin fur konsolashun an' den I jus' got offen dat muel an' plowed a straight furrer uv facts down de row uv his head: 'Br'er Peter,' sez I, 'de doctrine uv our church teach us it am not good fur er man wid er dozen chilluns to liv erlone on one side uv er plantashun, an' er nice, seekin' lookin' widder

'oman wid ten mo' to liv erlone on de yudder side. In union dar am strength, in numbers dar am prosperity, an' in Duteromety dar am happiness. Br'er Peter, I wants ter marry Sister Ca'line,' sez I. 'She am yo' widder an' de widder uv de church, but you know yourself she ain't had no sho' 'tall—jes' ha'f a marrid life an' er house full uv chilluns—ten uv 'em, all needin' sum lovin' father's gidin' arm, wid er hickory attachment, whilst my twelve ur fifteen all need de spirtool keer uv er good muther ercompament. De cotton pickin' seezen am 'most on us, an' if I kin jine our forces I'll hav er lead-pipe cinch on de cotton crap uv Tennessee to say nuthin' 'bout de fo'teenth 'mendment to de skule law fixin' de pro ratter uv all householders raisin' twenty or mo' widin de skule aige.'

"I tell you, sah, Br'er Peter tuck the thing mighty hard, mighty hard. He didn't wanter do dat thing 'tall. But arter he dun prayed over it, he cum out wid er new light in his eye, an' he put his hand on my head an' bless me an' say, 'Br'er Washington, I's prayed over it. It am de will uv de Lord. Lite on dat muel an' seek your konsolashun. Go in an' receive de sanshun uv her retenshun an' de kompliment uv her adorin'.' And he kinder wink his off eye an' sed, 'Go in an' win, fur you am de Samson uv love fightin' de Phillustines uv matrermony; but when you cum to git konsolashun from er widder'—an' dar he wink hes eye ergin—'use de same weepun dat Samson used an' victory am yourn.'

"But when I got to de widder's cabin an' tole her—great Scott, sah! she tuck it turribul hard. She didn't

wan' marry 'tall. Leastways she made me b'leeve it. Hit's jes' es I tole you, sah; you hafter wrastle mighty swift fur konsolashun when you goes to marry a widder.

" 'Br'er Washington,' she sez, 'dis am so suddent, so suddent! Don't you think you'd be satisfied ef I'd continue in de sisterly relashuns uv de church wid you?"

" 'Sister Ca'line,' sez I, sorter detarmined lak, 'I's had ten ever'day sisters all my life en sum seven hundred Sunday ones. What I now wants am one wife!'

"Oh, I tell you, sah, you gotter shoot mighty close fur konsolashun when you wants ter marry a widder!

"We kept it up for hours, she argyfyin' an' me argyfyin', she prayin' an' me prayin'. I tell you, she wus er speedy filly, an' she had no noshun uv quittin'. We went round de fus' quarter uv de last mile nose and nose—argyment ergin argyment, prayer ergin prayer. I thout sho' she had me distanced onct when she fotch out de scriptures on me an' turned to de twenty-second chapter uv Exerdust an' sed: 'Br'er Washington, read fur yo'self: '*Thou shalt not afflict any widder or fatherless chile.*' But I turned over to Timerthy, de fifth chapter an' de third verse, an' sez I,' Sister Ca'line, whut you read am Ole Testament. It am anshunt histery. Heah am de New Testament, heah am de new doctrine; '*Honor widders dat am widders, indeed.*' "Oh, I tell you, Marse John," laughed the old man, "I sho' hung onto de sulky wheels uv her contenshun wid de wings uv my orthorteries—you gotter hav sum speed lef' fur de home stretch ef you wants ter beat er widder home!

"An' so we went, 'round an' 'round, wheel ergin wheel, an both drivin' fur life, she quotin' scriptures and argyfyin' an' me comin' back wid Numbers an' Duterrumetics—an' sumtimes things dat wus Reverlashuns to her! At de half I got her tired, at de three-quarters she quit an' jes' befo' she got to de wire she giv up wid er tired, tangled break, an' sed:

" 'Brer Washington, it am de Lord's will.'

"Oh, I tell you, sah, you got ter use a mighty keen switch uv beseechment in de race ef you wanter lead er widder down de home stretch!

"But goodness grashus!" he said, as if suddenly remembering something. "I'd better be buildin' dis pen or we won't hav enny sawseges fur Kristmus," and he began to saw energetically.

"Hold on," I said, "You never told me whether you married the widow or not."

He looked at me in indignant astonishment—"Law, law, law," he said, "white folks got such cu'is ideas. In course I did—married her dat night an' tuck 'er home de naixt day; ain't I bin tellin' you whut er hard time I had gettin' konsolashun frum dat ar 'oman?"

He sawed vigorously away for awhile, but I could see he wished to tell something else. Finally I said:

"Well, go on, I'm waiting."

He turned around quickly, laid down his saw, laughed, and said: "How de wurl did you know dar was enything else? Bless my life, sah, but de very look uv er white man am er search warrant to de nigger's soul. Ef you bleege ter hab it, heah it am,"

he said as he looked slyly around: "I hadn't been married to dat 'oman but two years befo' I had to run fur er offis, too.''

"What office?" I asked.

He grinned sheepishly.

"Patr'ark uv de Santerfercashun," he said, "I beat Unk Peter fur dat offis, an' got even wid 'im at his own game."

"Lemme tell you, chile," he added, impressively, "two years uv konsolashun frum er widder will make a dead man or a Patr'ark outen 'most ennybody," and he resumed his sawing with a vigor.

THE WATERMELON SERMON

WATERMELON time is in full blast in Tennessee now. Ordinarily, the whites in the South cease to eat watermelons after the fifteenth of September, because they know that as soon as the cool nights begin every melon contains a hundred chills. But not so with the darkey. A chill rattles as harmlessly off the armour of his constitution as buckshot from the back of the Olympia. He can absorb miasma like a sponge, and, like it, grow fat as he absorbs. The negro, then, eats his melon until the November frosts kill the vines.

And a great treat it is. Did you ever wander over the fields, way down South, after the cotton was all picked, and the November breezes came cool and ladened with that delicate, indescribably rare flavor the frost gives when it first nips the mellow-ripe muscadine? You have shouldered your gun and gone out after old Mollie Cotton Tail. It was cool and crisp when you went out, but toward noon it has grown hot again. Flushed and tired, you stop to rest by the big spring that flows from under the roots of the big oak near the cotton field. In the shadow of that oak, half hid in the frost-bitten weeds, you find a little striped watermelon—a guinea melon, as the darkies call it—a kind of a volunteer melon that grows in the cotton every year, the first seeds of which were brought by some Guinea negro, from the coast of Africa, when he first

came over to servitude, with silver rings in his nose and ears. And though he failed to bring his idols and his household gods along with him, yet he did not forget the melon of his naked ancestors. Planting it as he hoed his first crop of cotton for a new master, it has never deserted him since, and so, year after year, it comes up amid the cotton, to remind him of the days it grew wild in a sunnier clime.

And there you find it this November morning. Boy like, you pounce on it with a shout and soon it is laid open, as red as your first love's lips and as sweet; and so cold it seems to have been raised in the deep-delved cellars of all the centuries. I am sorry for the boy who has grown to be a man and never, in a November morning's hunt after Old Mollie, had the exquisite sweetness of this satisfying surprise—the like of which is not equalled by the sweetness of any other surprise on earth.

Every darkey of any standing in Tennessee "gives a treat" at least once in his life. He will stint and economize for months to save money enough to invest in watermelons and tartaric acid (the acid makes the lemonade). Then, when the glorious day arrives, Nero, giving free entertainment to the citizens of Eternal Rome, is not in it with that darkey. Henceforth he can get anything in that community he wishes, from constable to presiding elder, while the widows of the church are "his'n" by a large majority!

I had heard that old Wash was going to run again for the "deaconship of Zion" over in the coon district of Big Sandy, and that he was going to give his annual treat.

These had always passed off beautifully and ended in the unanimous election of the old man to the office, and anything else he wanted. I thought it was all over and entirely harmonious until he came in the other night, looking like Montejo's flag-ship after Dewey's ten-inch shell went through her, "a-rippin' out her very innards"—as Old Wash himself described it—"from eend to eend."

But when I saw the old man, creeping into my library, I was certain he was in the last stages of Asiatic cholera, and I rang the telephone hastily to get my family physician. But he feebly raised his hand, and beckoned me to desist.

"No, no, Marse John; he can't do me no good—no good," as he feebly sank into a chair. Then he whispered:

"Jes a drap, a leetle drap, on my tongue,—jes' to let the old man shuffle off dis mortal coil wid a good taste in his mouth. It's all I wants."

Under the stimulant of that eternal beverage of moonlight and melody, he revived a little.

"What's the matter with you? Anybody been giving you a hoodoo," I asked.

"No, no, sah,—I—I— I gin a treat at Big Sandy."

"Well, you have given many a treat at Big Sandy. Why should this one make you look like a piney-wood coal-kiln after a cyclone had struck it?"

It took another dose from my side-board bottle to put enough life into the old man to make him take any interest in things. Then he brightened up and said:

"Dat's jes' hit—a man may go on doin ' de same

trick year arter year, ontwel it looks lak he cud do it wid his eyes shet, an' den at last, if he ain't mighty keerful, hit'll buck and fling 'im! De hardes' luck, I take it, in dis wurl', is when a man dun shuck de dice uv success ontwel dey seem to bob up at his word, only to play off on him an' bust 'im es his palsied han' shakes 'em fur de las' time."

His tears were flowing so freely and his remarks seemed so true and heartfelt, I did not have it in me not to brace him up with another pull from the side-board bottle. Then I saw he was ripe and reminiscent, and I lit my cigar, struck an easy attitude, and let him do the rest:

"On de Sundy befo' de fust Mundy uv de full moon in September," he went on, "cum off de 'lection fur 'ziden elder uv Zion, an' de next day am de day sot by law fur de 'lection of jestus uv de peace. So las' Sat'd'y I gin a treat. I axed ever' nigger in de deestrict dar, an' all de members uv Zion, an' Br'er Johnsing wus to preach de water-milion sermon.

"Ain't nuver heurd uv de watermilion sermon? Hit's de sermon preached at de feast uv de watermilion jes' befo' de new moon in September, an' it am one uv de doctrines uv Zion to kinder take de place uv de feast uv de Passover 'mong de Jews—only in dis case we don't pass over nuffin', 'specially de watermilions. Now, hit tain't ever' nigger kin preach de watermilion sermon. Hit takes a mighty juicy nigger to do hit, yallar with dark stripes, juicy at de core, full of tears an' sweet penertence an' easy laid open by de blade

of grace, an' brudder Johnsing am de slickest one I ever seed at it.

"Now, dat wus my time to git in my fine Italyun han', an' so I gin it out that hit wus to be my treat, an' I axed all de voters uv de deestrick an' all de members uv Zion ter be on han' fur de revival uv de speerit an' de refreshment uv de flesh.

"'Cordin' to my custom, jes' befo' de time fur de sermon I had all de watermilions laid out on de grass, one hundred uv de bigges' an' fattes' ones you ever seed. You see, I am constertushunally upposed to long sermons," he winked, "an' I knowed dey wa'n't a nigger livin' c'ud preach over ten minnits wid all dem watermilions a-layin' dar a-winkin' at 'im an' waiting to be led, lak' lambs, to de sacrifice. Does you see de p'int?"

I saw it.

"Wal, suh, you orter jes' heurd de prayer Br'er Johnsing put up—it wus short, but mighty sweet. De flavor uv de watermilions seem ter git inter hit, an' de 'roma uv hits juice b'iled outen his mouth. Marse John, you've seed dese kinder preachers dat talks to de good Lord wid all de easy fermileriaty uv a deestrick skule-teacher axin de president uv de skule-board fur what he wants, an' wid all de sassy assurance uv de silent partner in a lan'-offis bisness, ain't you? Wal, dat's de way Br'er Johnsing prayed, an' I wus de speshul objec' uv his conversashun wid de Almighty dat day. He tole 'im whut I'd dun fur dat community, informed 'im very posertively uv de fac' dat I wus a godly man, refreshed His mem'ry in a gentle

way consarnin' sum uv my long-furgotten deeds uv cheerity, an' gin Him sum' good, brotherly advice on how to git even wid me, an' in a measure pay off de debt of gratitude He owed me by makin' it His will dat I wus erg'in to administer de law uv de lan', both spiritual an' temper'l, an' fur ernudder twelvemonth ter be de venerbul ram uv de flock uv Zion, to lead His sheep to de fold an' by de still waters. Wal, suh, when he finish, mighty nigh ever' nigger dar said Amen, an' den dey lick dey chops an' look sorter dreamy lak over whar de watermilions lay'n de col' spring branch.

"Dis wus my time to spring de s'prise uv de evenin' on 'em, dat I'd fixed up. An' so I riz up wid de most sancterfied look on I cu'd git, one uv dem onworthy, miser-bul-sinner sorter looks dat we elders allers carry aroun' in our coat pockets along wid our bandanna han'kerchiefs fur eny emergency, an' I sez: 'Brudders an' sistrin, befo' we listen to de soulful sermon in store fur our spiritual natures, which Br'er Johnsing gwin'ter giv us in his ellerquent way, I's sprung a leetle s'prise on you, an' I wants you all to retire wid me an' refresh de innard man a leetle. Brudderin', knowin' my onworthiness an' de many obligashuns I am under to dis enlightened community uv Christian saints an' godly men an'wimmen, I's made two bar'ls uv ice-cold lemmernade, an' you'll find 'em a-settin', es a big s'prise,' sez I, 'on de houn's uv my ox-waggin, in de cool shade by de spring, wid plenty uv tin dippers fur all. We'll now adjourn twenty minnits fur refreshments.'

"Wal, suh, you sh'ud a heurd de shout! Ef de 'lection hed cum off den, I'd a got ever' vote in de deestrick an' a fair sprinklin' uv sum' in all de yudders. I went wid 'em an' drunk, too. An' we all drunk ter one ernudder's health. I drunk to Sister Ca'line, an' Br'er Johnsing he drunk to Dinah, an' de leetle niggers drunk, an' de ole niggers drunk, de gals an' de boys. I hilt up my dipper an' laugh, an' sed to Br'er Johnsing, 'Br'er Johnsing, here's to you,' sez I, 'an' all dat goes up must go down.' An' wid dat I swallered down.

"Den Br'er Johnsing—he's mighty funny—an' he hilt up his'n and laugh, an' say: 'Br'er Washington, here's to you,' sez he, 'an' all dat goes down nurver comes up ergin.' An' den we all laugh.

"But dat wus one time he wus turribly mistaken, es you will see.

"Wal, suh, when we all hed drunk enough we went back to hear de watermilion sermon, an' den eat de fruit uv whut we heurd. 'Tain't ever' man kin say dat, dat he eats de fruit uv whut he hears; digests de fustly, an' de secondly, an' de thudly, assimmerlates in de juicy rime uv de tangerbul thing, de logical konclushun uv de interlecshul fac.' An' darfore I've allers sed dat drawin' yo' konclushuns frum de heart uv a watermilion makes de bes' sermon in de wurl'.

"I b'leeve I tole you, dat dat lemmernade wus intended fur a s'prise fur 'em, didn't I?"

"Yes, I believe you mentioned that it was a little surprise of yours in store for them."

The old man groaned. "Marse John, fur heaben's

sake, annudder drap outen dat bottle! I'll hafter brace up erg'in to tell de sorrowin' scene dat follers. Thankee, thankee! I'm better now, an' maybe I kin finish, fur dat lemmernade turned out to be de bigges' an' sorrerfullest surprise dat ever come down a pike.

"Br'er Johnsing tuck fur his tex' de sermon uv Noah an' de ark an' whilst Noah wus de man menshuned, hit wus plain dat I was de applercashun. He went on to show dat I wus a godly man, jes' lak' ole Noah, an' dat I wus to de community uv Big Sandy whut Noah wus to Jeerruselum. He was makin' it short but er-gwine in two-minnit time, er-pacin' lak' ole Jo Patchen at er matternee fur er silver cup an' wreath uv roses, an' den all at onct he lifted up his voice an' sed: 'Yes brudderin, de waters uv de g-r-e-a-t deep riz up, an de bottom drop outen de clouds; de w-i-n-d-e-r-s uv heaben wus flung open, an' de upheaval uv de u-n-e-v-e-r-s-e begun——'

"Dat wus es fur es he got, befo' de word upheaval wus outen his mouth, sho 'nuff, de upheaval did begun. I seed 'im stop so suddenly he kicked up behind, clap his hands on his stummick an' try to bolt fur a locus' thicket, but he c'udn't—he jes' turned a complete summerset, athrowin' up his immortal soul es he turned. Den I heurd a turrible commoshun in de congregashun, an' I look erroun', an' ever' nigger dar wus in de same fix es Br'er Johnsing. Dey wus whoopin', an' barkin', and layin' out in ever' kinder way, an' all on 'em bent on de same thing. An' whut dey wus doin' to dat groun' wus a-plenty! Dey thought dey was pizened an' wus gwin'ter die, an' den sech s'archin' prayers es

went up to de throne uv grace, mixed in wid moans, an' groans, an' ice-cold lemmernade dat seem to think hit wus time ter rise erg'in and fetch ever'thing else frum de grave along wid it. By dis time I wus so 'stounded I didn't kno' whut ter do. I look erroun' an' I seed dat me an' ole Aunt Fat Fereby wus de onlies' ones dat wa'nt trying to turn inside out. She wus lookin' mighty ashy erroun' de gills, but she brace hers'f up an' started out ter raise dat good ole hymn:

"How firm a foundation'—

But she hadn't more'n got to 'foundashun' befo her foundashun wus shu'k, I seed her gag an' double up an' start in on:

'My risin' soul leaps up to sing,
A song of praise ter day.'

" 'Bout dat time I felt a 'tickler kinder mizry in my own innards, an' de nex' thing I disremember I had Sister Fereby 'round 'de neck an' we wus singin' dat hymn tergedder. Lor'! hit wus awful. I's seed menny a sight, but I nurver expect ergin ter see three hundred an' sixty-five niggers throwin' up at de same time. When sum' on 'em got dey secon' wind dey wanted to lynch me, but by de time dey got erroun' to me wid a rope dey' cided I wus too nigh dead to need killin', and by dis time dey all had to 'zamperfly de truth uv de biblical sayin' about de dog an' de thing he would go back to. By dis time ever' doctor in de country wus dar, fetchin' all de querrintine offercers, an' pest-tents, an' disenfec-tents, an' perparin'

fer chol'ra an' fever. An' den we foun' out what ailed us."

"In the name of heaven, what was it?" I asked eagerly.

The tears rolled down the old man's cheeks as he feebly begged for another drop to enable him to finish his tale. Then he said:

"Ain't I dun tole you hundreds uv times it am de leetle mistakes we make in life dat turns de tide? Ain't I? Wal, dat's whut ruined me dat day, an' terday I am a man widout offis an' widout honor in my ole age. Dat mornin', 'stead uv gwine down to de sto' myse'f to get de poun' uv tartar acid ter make up dat lemmernade wid, I saunt dat trifflin' Jim Crow gran'son uv mine, an' he got de names twisted, an' 'stead uv fetchin' me back tartar acid, he fotcht me back a poun' uv tartar emetic, an' I didn't do a thing but make up dat lemmernade wid it!"

"But, surely, they wouldn't treasure up such a a mistake against you, seeing that you suffered with the rest," I said.

"Marse John," said the old man, rising, "how long you gwine ter live wid niggers, an' den hafter be tole over an' over ergin de same thing? In course, dey didn't beat me fur offis on ercount uv dat fool mistake, but jes' lemme ax you, whar is de nigger livin' dat gwin'ter vote fur eny man dat'd lay out a hundred watermilions in de spring branch, let 'em look at 'em a hour, an' den turn dat nigger's stummick into a green persimmon fur a week? Whar is he, I ax?" And the old man crept feebly out to find him a cheap coffin.

A RACE FOR A VALENTINE

WHEN I looked out over the meadow near my window the other day, I saw some field larks there. One yellow-breasted fellow, as trim and proud as a race horse in racing form, sat on a clump of sedge-grass, the sentinel of a pretty group of other yellow-breasts who were feeding around. They had left the fields down by the woods early, and I wondered why it was. That night I asked Uncle Wash.

"Look heah, Marse John, don't you kno' dey am thinkin' 'bout Valentine Day, an' how dey gwine mate off by dat day? Huc'cum you done forgit dat?"

"You don't mean to tell me they are obliged to mate off by that day, whether they wish to or not, do you?" I asked.

"In co'se I does—whuther dey wants to or not. But dey most generally allers wants to. An' so does enybody else dat has got eny sense. You ain't nurver heurn tell of any old-maid birds, has you?"

"No"—I smiled—"I have not."

"Nor any old-maid niggers, nurther, is you?"

I had to laugh outright at this. But upon my life, I couldn't remember ever to have heard of one.

The old man chuckled. "In co'se you ain't. De nearer you gits to nachur, de happier you gwin'ter find folks 'ull be, an' de fewer rules an' regulashuns you'll find dey'll hav to go by. It's only white folks dat hav ole maids an' ole bachelors. It's only some uv dem

dat seem to konlude dat de Lord wus kinder off his base when he put us heah wid de nachul instinct fur matrimony in our hearts, an' dat ole Marse Noah was talkin' through his hat when he told us to be happy and multerply on de face uv de yearth.

"And does you kno' whut's de most buterful sight in de wurl to de ole man?" he asked presently, with some enthusiasm. "Hit's de sight of a beautiful, full-blooded, high-minded young 'oman, who am nachul an' good an' treads de yearth lak she know God made her to be queen, sum day, uv some man's home an' heart, an' de muther uv God-fearin' hones' men an' wimen.

"And does you kno' whut's de holiest sight in de wurl? Some church steeple, dried up ole maid, or some uv dese heah new-fangled interlecshul wemen, forever sputin' 'bout de laws uv progress, an' uglier den a burnt hole in a blanket? No; but hits dat same high-minded gal, when she reign de queen uv her home, an' stamps de little gold coins uv her fiah-side wid de eagle uv her nobilerty.

"Dat's de holiest thing in de wurl. Dem's de sho' nuff coins uv de republic, de bonds uv de realm an' de dollars uv our daddies.

"But when it comes to valentines de purtiest one I ever seed wus de one Marse Robert raced fur, 'way back befo' de wah. I don't nurver spec' ter see one look lak dat ergin," said the old man, enthusiastically. "De day de race cum off she wus de purtiest picture I ever seed—eyes big and black an' soft under droopy lids dat sorter shaded 'em lak de fringe uv de evenin'

skies when dey close in de twilight—dem kinder eyes dat make you think dey don' kno' whuther dey wanter stay awake an' kiss you or go to sleep an' dream about you. Her black hair wus tucked up unner a plumed hat. One plume fell over on de right an' hid her leetle pink year, creepin' out like a white rabbit at nightfall from under a huckleberry bush. De yudder plume fell over on de lef' an' almost hid de yudder year peepin' out lak one uv dese heah leetle white snow-birds wid a leetle red on his wings"—and the old man chuckled at the poetical turn he had given to his description. "And den she had so much hair," went on the old man. "It fell down from unner dat hat, on her shoulders, in great big twisted coils, twisted 'roun' an' 'roun' lak a double hank uv fines' yarn, an' big es de full-mussled forearm uv a Hal filly. Dat's all," he added proudly, "'cep' a pair uv leetle dimples dat 'ud make a cloudy day smile out in sunshine, an' 'er leetle cooin' laugh dat 'ud make de pigeons come home to roost.

"Dat was her, Miss Rose, ole Kunnel Rivers' daughter, dat Marse Robert had loved ever since he was big 'nuff to toss her on his pony an' ride up de pike.

"Now ole Kunnel Rivers was a big gun. He wus Marse Jeems K. Polk's law partner, an' de biggest lawyer he wus in Tennessee. He nurver went in for politics much, 'cept when Marse Jeems 'ud run for Gov'ner or sumpin'. Den he'd quit his practice long ernuff to fight for his pardner, an' when he flung hisself in de shafts uv de political ban' wagon sumpin' 'ud have to move or bust. But he nurver would have no

offis hisself, an' when Marse Jeems wus nomernated fur de President, dey say hit wus his speech dat turned de tide an' nomernated Marse Jeems. Course when Marse Jeems was 'lected, de time he beat Marse Henry Clay, he tole de Kunnel he could have enything he wanted, an' it 'ud be saunt him on a silver waiter. But he didn't want no offis at home. He want to rest, he say, an' aigucate Miss Rose. So Marse Jeems he saunt him as minister uv de gospel, to carry plenty-in-de-penitentiary to de heathens in Europe. 'Twas some years befo' he cum home, an' den Miss Rose look lak I jes' tole you 'bout. Marse Robert he'd graduated at West P'int, an' cum out uv de Mexercan war a captain. He cum home on er furlow dat summer —de summer Miss Rose got back from Europe. He ain't tell me, but I knowed he cum for Miss Rose. So de nex' night arter he cum, we saddled up an' rid over to de Kunnel's. Marse Robert went to see Miss Rose, but I went along to make tings lively wid de yaller gals in de kitchen.

"When we got dar, Marse Robert jumped offin his hoss an' run up de steps fo' jumps at a time, jes' lak he allus done ever sense he wus a boy, an' den I seed 'im stop, wid dat quick milertary way he had, lak sumbody said: 'Halt!' Fur dar stood Miss Rose at de do' stately an' cold es a queen, an' de thing dat halted Marse Robert was a furrin bow, an' den dis:

" 'Good mornin', Cap'n Young. I'm pleased to see you ergin!'

"Befo' dat she'd allers called him Robert, an' he called her Rose.

"Now when it cum to pilin' on de dignerty, me an' Marse Robert wus as good as all Europe, an' we cu'd put it on twell you'd think we wus de backbone uv de North Pole hitse'f. So Marse Robert he straightened hisse'f up, bowed low an' sed:

" 'Good evenin', Miss Rivers; allow me to welcome you home ag'in.'

"I soon seed whut wus de matter, for in dat parlor, a settin' up dar so nachul you'd a thort he owned de hole thing, wus one uv dese heah furrin jukes—enyway, he wus a furriner way up in gee in his country, an' had followed Miss Rose home and wus gwin fer to marry her.

"An' hit wus de same way in de kitchen. Dar sot a leetle bandylegged mulatto lookin' feller, wearin' knee-breeches, an' de calf uv his legs lookin' lak a corn-fed steer about Christmas time. An' when I went in dar he wus a-settin' back an' a chawin' his cud an' a talkin' to de yaller gals, an' all uv 'em wus a-puttin' on furrin airs an' a-talkin 'furrin talk scan'lus. Now I nurver has been much on furrin langwidge. My mammy allers sed she knowed I cud larn Greek an' sech kase I tuck to our own so nachul. But I's allers wondered whut fo'ks wanter larn so many furrin langwidges fur wid only jes' one idee to spress in 'em all. It's lak a man buyin' fo' or five diffunt kinder fine kerridges jes' to hitch de same little ole mule to.

"Course I thot dat little feller wus a nigger—whut fur he sociatin' wid niggers ef he wa'n't? an' arter I looked at 'im thort I'd joke 'im a leetle, an' I sez: 'Say, nigger, whar'd you cum frum enyway, an' whut

kinder hosses is you got in your country, dat sires yaller colts wid flax mane an' tails?'

"Well, sah, dat made 'im so mad dat he jumped up, cussed 'round in French, bowed to de gals, an' den whutcher reckin dat flax-mane nigger wid de cornfed legs do, boss? Why he challenge me to fight er duel wid 'im de naixt day at daylight! Hit made me so mad! Sez I: 'Look heah, nigger, ef fightin' is whut you want, sez I, a-spittin' on my hands an' getherin' up de meat ax, 'jest he'p yo'se'f to de butcher-knife an' wade in!'

"Well, sah, I reckin we'd a fit den an' dar if Clara hadn't cum in. Now Clara wus Miss Rose's maid, an' had been wid her to dis furrin lan.' Befo' she left she'd promised to marry me de very day Miss Rose married Marse Robert. She wus de purtiest kind uv a yaller gal, with curly hair and black eyes an' a laugh dat 'ud start my h'art to rabbit-huntin' eny day. But heah she cum in, an' 'stid uv kissin' me lak she uster do, she 'lowed I wus a low-bred nigger, not fit to sociate wid qualerty fo'ks, an' den whut you reckon? Sho 'nuff, I kno' you ain't gwine b'leeve it, boss, but she ups an' 'lows dat Flax Mane wan't no nigger at all, but had a family tree, dat his name was Mister Valley, Mr. Juke's Valley, an' he wus a furrin' gen'man an' white es Marse Robert wus. An' den she 'stounded me clean out'n my boots. She 'lowed dat she an' Mister Valley wus gwin'ter marry an' go to Europe on a bridle to'er, along wid Miss Rose an' de Juke, an' dat both couples wus now ready for kongratulashuns an' bridle presents.

"Well, sah, I seed in a minnit how de lan' lay.

'Stid of a bridle to'er, I felt like takin' a paddle to'er! De sassy thing! Sez I to de man:

" 'Well, sah, if you wus as good as a nigger I'd ax yo' pardin, but eny white man dat'll sociate wid a nigger ain't good as a nigger.' An' den I sez to Clara: 'An' es fer you, wid yo' sassy airs, befo' me an' Marse Robert git thru' wid you all, yo' Miss Rose will be willin' 'to marry de onliest gen'man in dese parts—Cap'n Robert Young—an' as for you, you'll be glad ernuff to marry your gran'mammy's black cat. De wildgoose fly mighty high,' sez I, 'but I's noticed he allers cum down on de groun' at last to roost. De smalles' 'possum allers climbs de biggest trees,' sez I, 'an' I's allers noticed de higher de family tree de smaller am de little 'possum up in de top.'

"Wid dat I shuck my boot an' lit.

"Well, sah, hit wus de same way in de parlor, an' Marse Robert didn't git no more konsolashun dar den I did in de kitchen. We rid home dat night, an' nary one uv us didn't say a word; but I cu'd see Marse Robert bitin' his mustache sorter nervous lak, an' jinglin' de spur on his boot, but he didn't say nary word. An' to save my life I c'udn't' hep thinkin' uv how pretty Clara look in dat little apron wid her furrin' ways, an' it mighty nigh broke my h'art to think she gwine marry dat scrub.

"But Marse Robert wus a thurrerbred an' he never sed a word, not even de next week when dey sent out de invites to Miss Rose's weddin'. But I notis de spirit all seem to go out uv 'im—he didn't take no intrust in de hosses—an' 'twus a bad sign when Marse

Robert was hurt dat way. But he wus game, an' de fust thing he done wus to give a swell dinner fur all de young people to meet Miss Rose an' de Juke. Den it wus our time to shine, an' bless yo' soul, honey, we sho' did cut de pigeon-wing. De Juke had fotch over two thurrerbred English hunters to take exercise on, whilst he wus here, an' dey wus good ones, too. He rid over to de party on one hoss, an' Miss Rose on de yuther, an' arter de dinner when he and Marse Robert got to talkin' hoss dey all went out to see de Juke's hosses. Marse Robert, lak de gen'man he wus, praised de good p'ints uv de Juke's hosses, but sed nuffin' 'bout his own. Den de Juke up and sed:

" 'Bofe uv dese hosses, Cap'n, am sons of Nestor, an' dat hoss run secon' to Priam when he won de Darby.'

" 'Ah!' sez Marse Robert, 'well-bred, capital fellers. I kongratulate you, sah, on havin' two sech good ones.'

"Den de Juke he wanted to see Marse Robert's hosses, an' Marse Robert tole me to lead 'em out—ole Black Bess, an' Telula an' all de mares an' de colts.

" 'Wash,' sez he, 'bring out de sire,' an' I fotch him out, lookin' lak de gran' hoss he wus, puttin' on all his airs, ca'se Miss Rose an' de ladies wus lookin' at 'im.

" 'My! how proud he looks,' sez Miss Rose. 'He steps lak a king.'

" 'Yesm', Miss Rose,' sez I, a-liftin' my ole hat, 'beca'se he knows a queen's lookin' at 'im, Miss.'

"Miss Rose blush an' de ladies laugh an' de Juke sez:

" 'Cap'n, whut's his name?'

" 'Dat's Priam, sah,' sez Marse Robert.

" 'De devil you say!' sez de Juke. 'Not de hoss dat won de Darby?'

" 'De same, sah,' sez Marse Robert; 'my father imported him.'

"At dis de ladies all smile, an' de Juke turned 'round spiteful lak on his heels an' walk off.

"Arter de coffee Marse Robert danced de Ferginny reel wid Miss Rose to show de Juke how it wus done, an' ever' time he'd lead Miss Rose down de Juke 'ud get mad an' show his temper in leetle things. An' once when Marse Robert danced wid annudder lady an' Miss Rose an' de Juke wus talkin' in de alcove, I watch Miss Rose an' I seed she wus lookin' at Marse Robert mor'n she wus at de Juke. I laugh an' say to myse'f: 'God bless you, Miss Rose, you sorter gettin' over dat furrin' feelin', or I don't kno' nuffin' 'bout signs uv love!'

"Den de Juke he got too full uv wine. Our gen'man never tuck but one glass when de ladies wus 'roun', but de Juke he jes' tanked up scan'lus, an' de mo' he drunk de bigger fool he wus. He seem' to be mad 'bout sumpin', an' arter dinner he sez to Marse Robert, whar Miss Rose wus, dat he'd lak ter go on a fox-hunt in dis country to sho' de grit uv his hunters.

" 'I'll git up one fur you, wid pleasure, sah,' sez Marse Robert.

" 'Make hit an all-day run, Cap'n,' sez de Juke. 'I wanter sho' you yo' American hosses can't stay in de race wid our English ones.'

"Marse Robert flushed an' he say: 'You am my guest, so I cannot reply to dat taunt. But I assure you, it am very hard for me to resist the challenge you fling down.'

"De Juke he laugh an' sez: 'Aw, don't stand back on etterket, Cap'n. Let us put up a leetle prize fur de winner—aw!—an' race fur it—aw! My blood am bilin' fur a leetle excitement—fawncy!'

" 'Wid pleasure, den, since it suits you, Juke,' sez Marse Robert. 'Friday week am Valentine Day—shall we git up a party uv young folks dat day, Miss Rivers?' he sez, turnin' to Miss Rose. 'We'll get up ole Slippery Red, de ole red fox dat has been run a hundred times an' ain't never been wursted by a pack yit. We'll shet 'im out from his hole, an' make a life an' death fight uv it wid him and de hounds.'

"An' den he tole de Juke all about ole Red, an' how no hounds had ever been able to wurst 'im, no pack could ever ketch 'im.

" 'Capital—aw—capital!' sez de Juke. 'Dat'll try our hosses.'

"An' den he stop quick, look at Miss Rose wid his leetle sharp eyes an' say: 'An' de man dat gets de brush gets Miss Rose as de valentine—aw?'

"At dis Miss Rose turn scarlet, Marse Robert flushed, too, an' frowned, an' his eyes flashed so I thort sho' he gwin'ter furgit hiss'ef an' slap de Juke's jaws, as he orter. But des at dat time Miss Rose look up full into Marse Robert's eyes, sorter 'pologizin' an' sorry lak, an' sorter blushin', too, wid anudder funny kind o' look dat come and went lak a flash. But I knowed

what it wus. It wus true love's decision in favor uv de true lover, an' she done it widout knowin' it. But it tuk all de mad outen Marse Robert's face an' put a merry beam in his eyes, an' he bowed to Miss Rose an' sez:

" 'An' whut say de fair lady in de case?'

"Miss Rose laugh and say: 'Oh, de Juke must have his way, you know; isn't he our guest?'

"Den I never see Marse Robert so happy befo'. He seem ter fairly bubble over with joy an' sperits. He shine lak a star, an' his wit wus as keen es a frosty mornin'.

"De nex' mornin' he cum out ter me an' he sez: 'Wash, fools talk, but wise men act. Fetch out Priam!'

"We had been trainin' Priam sence Christmas to run in de fo' mile race fur de Cumberland Cup. Marse Robert look him over an' sez: 'How hard is he?'

" 'Marse Robert,' sez I, 'he is hard as de prongs uv a buck uv ten.'

" 'How much does you weigh?' sez he.

" 'One hundred and seventy pounds,' sez I.

" 'Good; dat's my weight; don't train him fur speed eny mo' but for distance; gallop him ten miles every day and back ergin; to-morrow I'll tell you de res'.'

"I caught on in a minnit an' I sed: 'My Gord, Marse Robert you sho' ain't gwine run dis hoss in a foxchase, is you? Why, he cost us twenty thousand dollars!'

"Marse Robert looked at me quick an' sez: 'If he

cost a million, he wud'nt be too good to run for the prize he gwin'ter run fur!'

"Well, sah, I gallup dat hoss ever' day 'kordin' to orders, an' when de day uv de chase come, I b'lieve he cu'd run cross de State uv Tennessee, from Carter to Shelby, an' never draw a long breath.

"De whole country turned out to see de chase, cause Old Red had a County repertashun, an' dey knowed it was gwin'ter be a famous race. All de ladies and gen'men wus dar, but none of 'em knowed what wus at stake 'cept Miss Rose, Marse Robert an' de Juke.

"Ole Flax Mane wus dar, mounted on de Juke's yuther hoss, whilst I rid ole Kit, de gray mule. I rid up, an' sez to 'im: 'You seem to think you's mounted dis mornin'.'

" 'I kno' I am,' sez he. 'I'm mounted on a son of Nestor. What's dat you ridin'?'

" 'I's ridin' a son-uv-a-gun,' sez I—'ole Kit—de gray mule—not much on pedigree, to be sho', but hell on short cuts an' gittin' dar! An' ef you got enything to put up 'cept your pedigree an' your knee pants,' sez I, 'I'll bet dis mule ergin yo' mount I'll be at de killin' fust.'

"He looked at me scornful lak an' rid off.

"Well, sah, hit wus a chase. De air was cool an' frosty an' de groun' jes' wet 'nough for good nosin'. You could almost smell de breath uv Nachur, an' I b'lieve I cu'd a run a fox myse'f by he scent. We had two packs, cause no one pack had ever been able to run Ole Red down, an' we wanted to git 'im dis time. We

knowed his tricks, an' saunt one pack five miles away, up in de Hampshire hills, to be hilt and turned on him fresh, whar he allers dodged de tired-out dogs. Den we put de fus pack out an' soon hit de trail. Ole Red allers let a pack run 'im 'bout fo' miles fo' fun, den he'd ether outfoot 'em to de Hampshire hills and Hickman County, or ef he didn't feel much lak runnin' dat day, he'd laf at 'em an' dodge 'em back to his hole in de bluff. But dis mornin' we had put a nigger at de hole, an' arter chasin' him 'roun' an' roun' for fo' hours, an' all widin five miles, he wus seen ter come over de hills an' make for his home in de lime-rock bluff. But de man at de hole had stop it up an' skeered him off, an' den de ole feller knowed he wus in fur de race uv his life, an' he shot away to de hills lak a streak uv red fire, wid de hounds in full bay. Marse Robert and de Juke followed de hounds nose to nose. Dey went over fences, an' breasted creeks an' cleared ditches, a-ridin' lak two demons; but de rest uv us tuck short cuts an' rode from hill to hill an' watched 'em. Priam wus pullin' on Marse Robert lak a team under lash an' wantin' to run over de hounds, an' de Juke plyin' de spur an' ridin' lak mad. I never seed sech reckless ridin' befo' nor sense. I cotch up wid 'em dar an' follered 'em in de hills an' rid wid 'em fur a mile. Ole Kit had got her second wind, an' no man ever heard uv a mule makin' a misstep. Den de onexpected happened. Dey had run five miles an' de pack was still fresh, an' it looked lak dey gwine wind Ole Red up dar. Marse Robert and de Juke was both ridin' fur life to be in at de finish, when all at once de

Juke's hunter went down up to de knee in a ground-hog hole, an' his rider made a fine turn over his head. I gin a whoop, cause I knowed dat gin de race to Marse Robert. Den I see Marse Robert pull up, jump down an' he'p him up. De Juke wus all right, but his hunter was dead lame.

" 'Blow yo' horn!' sez Marse Robert.

" 'What fur?' sez de Juke; 'it's yo' race now.'

" 'Fur yo' other hoss,' sez Marse Robert.

"De Juke flushed, looked at Marse Robert quick lak and sed:

" 'By God, Cap'n, you's white!'

" 'Oh, the chase ain't started good, yit!' sed Marse Robert; 'he'll turn soon an' race us clear back to his hole in de rock an' die dar if we ketch 'im at all. So mount, an' here goes!'

"Ole Flax Mane had come up wid de yuther hoss an' dey mounted an' whirled away. Well, sah, de funnies' thing happen den. Ole Flax Mane didn't kno' as much about Hickman County bogs as he did 'bout duelin', an' es I started off for a short cut on a lope, I hear 'im hollerin' fur help. When I got dar he had walked squar' into a bog, an' ef he hadn't got holt uv a big limb dat hung over it, whar he was hangin' lak a gray 'possum, he'd been buried right dar, pedigree an' all. I sot on de bank, an Ole Kit, an' laugh whilst he beg me to he'p him out.

" 'No,' sez I; 'but I think I'll cut off dat limb, 'kase it seem to be hangin' in de way uv de hunters.'

"Well, sah, uv all de tears an' petishuns he put up in his parley-voo tongue! It made ole Kit weep!

" 'What'll you gimme,' sez I, 'ef I show you how to git out?'

" 'Meester Vashington; oh, Meester Vashington!' he sed; 'Oh, efferyt'ing!'

" 'Well,' sez I, 'clime up on dat limb an' straddle it. Now gimme dat suit uv huntin' clothes you got on. I lak dem brass buttons, an' I think dem knee-breeches will jes' about fit old Kit. Pull 'em off,' sez I, 'an' toss 'em over, an' I'll tell you.'

"He clime up an' shed 'em quick; dat lef' 'im wid nuffin' on but a huntin' shu't.

" 'Now,' sez I, as I started off, 'jes' foller de limb twell you git to de tree, an' den foller de tree twell you git to de ground, an' de next time we meet,' sez I, 'I hope you'll be shorter on pedigree an' longer on habiliments,' an' I rid off an' lef' 'im crawlin 'along dat lim' whilst de cold breeze sung a song thro' his only gyarment to help him along.

"But de chase on de back track fur home I'll never furgit. Only Marse Robert an' de Juke follered de houns. De rest of us jes' tuck short cuts from hill to hill an' watch 'em. But Ole Red tuck off over hills an' down valleys, cross creeks an' woods, an' stubble, flinty roads, an' holler bottoms, an' allers jes' behin' de pack rid Marse Robert holdin' back Priam to keep 'im from runnin' over de pack, hoss an' rider lak one, bendin' to de stride, straitenin' to de jump, plungin' wid de leap.

"An' allers de Juke was dar, but diggin' de spurs to his mount lak a red madman. An' de two packs wus givin' a glowin' tongue dat echoed from de hollows

an' made de blood leap. On dey went, Ole Red in a long lope, scuddin' over de ye'rth lak de shadder uv a red March cloud 'cross de sky. Sho' 'nuff, he wus headin' agin for his den, to beat de hounds dar, an' we cut 'cross, all de ladies and gen'mens, 'cept Marse Robert an' de Juke, to see 'im at de finish. We heurd 'em comin' 'long 'fore dey got to us. Ole Red wus sore an' tired an' nearly run down. Dey cum in sight on de Dobbins hills, Ole Red headed fur de home he wus never agin to enter. Down Bigby Creek valley he cum, headed straight for us, de houn's boilin' outen de ground behind 'im an de two riders jes' behind. Dey struck de creek an' flew up de bank—but only one rider come up—de Juke—an' he flew along for de finish.

" 'My Gord! sez I, an' I looked at Miss Rose settin' on her hoss in de group. She was white as de lace 'roun' her neck. I thort she'd faint. Den I look agin. Marse Robert had cooly stop an' let Priam plunge his nose in de creek waters for three swallows. It flash over me dat de didn't want to be in at de finish. Miss Rose thought it, too, an' I seen her reel in de saddle an' sorter cry out. On, on, come de Juke. On flew de pack. On loped Old Red. Two dogs outfooted de yuthers, an' now run side 'n side wid de fox, dey heads cocked sideways an' eyein' Ole Red for a ketch, an' de ole fox snappin' an' snarlin' back at 'em. De nex' minnit de hole pack would er bin on 'im, de Juke right in de bunch an' smilin' wid a satisfied smile.

"Miss Rose sot lak a statue an' as white. Ef Marse Robert wus doin' it fur revenge, he sho' had his fill.

On, on dey come—music, howlin', shouts. De Juke had run over de hindmost houns an' wus headed for de tired out ole fox, when I seed Miss Rose flush red den she lifted her han' an' waved her han'kerchief in a little sorter beck'nin' way to Marse Robert—an' he cum!

"He'd waited for dis all 'long, an' now for de fust time he gin Priam his head, an' de game hoss come lak powder afire, an' es ef he was winnin' anudder Darby. Marse Robert was smilin' lak a boy playin' a winnin' trick. He rode over de hounds lak dey been a barn floor—shot past de Juke lak a whirlwind—an' den I see 'im do de trick he learned on de plains—fling one leg from de saddle, swing down, holdin' by Priam's mane, ride squar' over Ole Red, pick 'im up by de nape uv de neck as he passed, den strai'ten up in de saddle, an' gallop up to Miss Rose, holdin' de squirmin' fox at arm's length, whilst her own color come back redder dan Ole Red's brush.

" 'They shan't kill 'im,' laughed Marse Robert, 'he's too game to die!'

"Den he wheeled Priam, rid up to Miss Rose's saddle, an' said:

" 'A merry race, my friends; an' ef you'll ride over to my home we'll have a weddin' an' a dinner—Rose an' I are goin' to marry."

"An' dat's whut dey done—dey sho did!"

Holdin' de Squirmin' Fox at Arm's Length.

HOW UNCLE WASH GOT RID OF HIS MOTHERS-IN-LAW

I WAS telling old Wash the other night that I thought the President was a great man and that if he didn't make any break from now on, as for instance about knocking out states' rights and undue blowing about the devilish little Japs who are itching to scrap with us, he would rank among the great presidents.

The old man was thoughtful for awhile, looking into the fire.

"Wal, sah, he sho' is got all de year-marks—a senserble, dermestic wife an' no signs uv a muther-in-law. Now, sah, befo' eny man kin be great he must fus' ax his wife an' arter he gits her consent he mus' ax his muther-in-law. No man kin be great, don't keer how much 'bility he's got, ef his wife is in society an' his muther-in-law is in de house. You can look all down de line, sah, an' when you finds dat combinashun you'll find a man whose growin' gourd uv greatness is liable to wilt eny day, like Jonah's, at de fus' good jolt it gits. Wid both uv 'em in society an' both in de house, why, Lord, boss, his gourd will nurver even sprout!

"Did I uver tell you 'bout my 'sperience in dat line an' how nigh I cum to missin' greatness, all on account uv a few muther-in-laws? It wus a close shave an' if I hadn't seed de way de ship wus headed an' steered

out from dat combernashun, instead uv bein' dat gen'-man an' floserpher whose 'pinions you so highly values,' he chuckled modestly, "you'd a had a ole nigger fit only fur de woodpile an' de blackin' bresh."

"Marse John," he laughed as he bit off a chew of Brazil Leaf Twist, bred in the hills of Maury, "did you kno' the ole man am a Only? The only man dat ever lived dat had fo' muther-in-laws at unct—driv' a fo'in-han' uv 'em, so to speak! Oh, I kno' what you 'bout to say, sah—but mine wus legitermates, de actu'l product uv de law an' matremony."

"Nonsense," I said, "you couldn't have been married to four women at once, as sly an old coon as you are. Though I did hear Marse Nick Akin say that he knew of his own knowledge that you once had three wives but gave two of them to the preacher if he would make you an elder in his church, which bargain was duly consummated. Oh, I knew you were driving a very long string of tandems, old man, but four abreast? Tell about it."

He laughed so loud the pointer jumped up from his bed on the rug before the fire and barked.

"Did Marse Nick vi'late de conferdence I composed in his veracity?" he laughed again. "Wal, I jis' well tell it fur you'll nurver guess how it wus.

"Long in de fifties I spliced up wid a likely young widder dat wus de sod-relic uv Br'er Simon Harris, a 'Piscopal brudder up at Nashville. Befo' dat she had been de relic of several gen'men uv color. Fur a week or so I wus so busy co'tin her dat I wa'n't very 'tickler jis' whut her entitlements an' habilerments

wus, nur jis' whut mineral rights an' easements went wid de property.

"I's allers noticed it's dat a way in de co'tin' stage an' hits a wise dispensashun uv ole Marster to trap us all into matremony an' make us blin', lak snakes in August; an' ever' one uv us, when he gits his seckin' sight arter de entrapment, wakes up to fin' dat in de deed to de state uv matremony dar has been passed wid de free-hold a few hererditerments dat he didn't cal'culate went wid de lan'.

"Sum uv us, uv co'rse nurver gits dey seckin' sight at all. But he's bohn dat way!

"But I ain't talkin' uv dem. I's nurver writ a fool's almernac yit!

"But I claims I am de only man dat ever got fo' muther-in-laws, when I didn't 'spec' to git eny!

"Arter a breef but very pinted co'tship, in which I done de usual close settin', low layin' an' tall lyin', I hitched up my team an' driv' up to Nashville an' married Sally. Arter de circus I driv' de team 'round to de door fur to carry her home an' I went in fur to pack up her things. I got 'em all in one big box, fur Br'er Simon hadn't been very felicertus in passin' round de hat, an' when I tuck it out to de wag'n dar sot Sally an' fo' uther ladies all es cheerful an' happy as fo' ole tabby-cats in a hay loft.

" 'Dese am my muthers, Wash,' sez Sally sweetly, 'an' uv co'se dey 's all gwine to live wid us.'

" 'Look heah, gal,' sez I sorter faintly, 'I ain't nurver heerd uv enbody havin' mor'n one muther.

" 'Dese other three am jes' es dear,' sez she,

p'intin' to de three ole ladies, 'dat's Simon's muther, dat's mine, an' dem over dar—'

"Marse John, I nearly had a fit! Do you kno' dat gal had de muthers uv ever' one uv her fus' husbands dar an' claimin' dey wus mighty nigh to her?

"Dar wa'n't nothin' to do but to git a divorcement an' es I wa'n't quite ready fur dat yit, I made de bes' uv it an' driv' off; but I knowed if dar wus ever a day when I needed sum brains now wus de time. An' de three sod muthers,—dat wus de entitlement I give to de three muthers uv Sally's dead husbands,—dey wus jes' plain ole grannies, wid de usual tongue an' de perviserty fer huntin' up trouble dat wu natu'lly predistined fur sumbody else.

"But Sally's muther she wus a fine lookin' 'oman, jes a shade heftier an' handsumer than Sally so I teched her mighty tenderly an' gin her to onderstan' dat I fully intended to fulfill to de letter de scrip'tul injunshuns nv filial affecshuns. She wus a hefty 'oman, sah, but she wus es bossy es she wus hansum, es I found out. De day she landed at home, sah, I seed she'd sot in to own de place an' in two weeks, sah, sides ownin' Sally an' de sod-muthers, she owned de mules, de cow, de pigs an' de farm, me an' my 'ligious convicshuns an' perlitical preferment.

"But es I wus sayin', she wus a han'sum 'oman!

"Now I's allers willin' to be bossed fur a while by a handsum 'oman, but when it comes to dat batch of ole sod muthers dat looked lak busted bags uv dried apples, dat wus a nurr thing, But I's noticed dar is allers a kin' of communercashun 'mong women folks

es to de bossin' uv er man. It jis' travels by grapevine, or dis here wireless business in de air, to de end dat when one 'oman kin boss er man all uv 'em think dey can do it.

"An' dey think right, only in dis case de thinkin' hadn't all ben dun yit. So dey all jes' put me down as dead easy.

"I let 'em have free han' till de honeymoon wus over. I didn't think I orter mix eny vinegar wid dat; but by dat time de whole tribe uv 'em wus needin' sum uv de salt dat Lot's wife got, an' mebbe sum uv de fire an' brimstone dat wus de 'casion uv her saltin'. Wal, sah, dey sot in fur infairs an' didn't do nuthin' but eat fur two weeks. I had to give 'em three infairs myself an' then they gin to nose aroun' an' git my naburs to have infairs. Fur two weeks mo' dar wa'n't nuffin but infairs fur de bride, an' groom, fur my naburs wus polite, till dey wusn't a chicken or shote left in five miles uv my home, an' if dar had been a hard winter an' de white folks' chickens had roosted high, we would er had a hard time uv it.

"Wal, I stood dat, 'caze dar wus a honeymoon an' good eatin' gwine on wid it, but 'long 'bout de thud week when de sod-mammies gin to tell me how I orter roach my hair an' run my farm I gin to lay my plans fur axshun.

"Dey wus all 'Piscopaliuns, es I wus sayin', an' dey bleeved turrible in Good Friday; an' ever' Friday wus Good Friday wid dem when it come to eatin.' When I seed my chickens all gwine an' de pigs an' sich, I got so disgusted wid dese Good Fridays dat I wanted

to be a jay-bird fur a while so I cu'd git off to hell ever' Friday myse'f! Frum dat dey begin to rub it in to me 'bout baptism an' so forth an' dat didn't tend to make me change in de resolushuns I had fixed up. I went on fixin' my plans an' layin' low, meek as Moses outwardly but inwardly full uv wrath.

"By dis time dey gin to ax in all de bredderin uv de chu'ch to he'p 'em eat an' settin' up by moonlight wid 'em a holdin' han's an' prayin'. Now, sah, de hefty one nurver mixed up in dese small things—she wus layin' fur bigger game. She seed de sod-muthers wur managin' it all right an' as she knowed she owned dem an' Sally an' dey all owned me, why she let it res' at dat.

"Sides dat, as I sed, she wus a han'sum 'oman!

"I let it run on till de time whut dey call Ash We'nesday come, when dey all had a feast an' special prayers fur de souls uv all who had died frum de beginnin' uv de worl' till den,—or sumpin' nurr like it. I had already spent all my money an' dey had ordered lumber fur a new house, 'sides orgernizin' a society to build de nigger preacher in town a rookery. Dey called it a pay supper—an' I done all de payin'! It wus all to cum off de night uv Ash We'nesday.

"Now dat Ash bizness sot me to thinkin'. Here wus my home turned into a karnival uv noise an' carousin' an' drinkin' an' hoodoo'in', an' me payin' fur it.

" 'Wal,' sez I to myse'f, 'I'll jes' turn dis thing into a Ash We'nesday sho' nuff, so I goes out an' cuts down a ash tree an' makes me a good, lithe stick dat would knock a bull down, an' den bounce back into yo' han's.

Dat wus fur de bredderin. Den I broke up a good ash-bar'l an' made de paddles handy fur de sisterin, an' I sot 'em in de corner behin' de cup'ard.

"De night cum, but dat time dey didn't keer nuff fur me to ax me into de feast. I wus jes' er common ole Baptis' nigger. I waited till dey wus all dar, de sod-muthers in white apruns, candles burnin' an' dude niggers an' niggeresses frum town and ever' whar, all s'posin' to be payin' fur a thing dat finally cum outen my pocket. I walked in an' sot down by de fire, but befo' I got sot good, one of dem dude niggers put er insultment on me.

"Dat suit me all right. I didn't want to start de fight in my own house—dat wa'n't good manners—but soon es dat nigger put de insultment on me, I wus reddy.

" 'Frien's,' sez I, 'I am a plain ole Baptis' nigger, but es I onderstan' it, dis am Ash We'nesday.'

" 'You bet it am, ole Moses,' sez one uv de dudes, 'an' it ain't a good place fur Baptis' to eat—dey am liabul to have de collect!'

"I didn't see de p'int, but dey did, an' all laf'd.

" 'Yes,' sez I, 'he mou't, but he is mor'n apt to have stumic enuff left to read de burial sarvices over a few dudes,' an' I lit in. I'd locked de do' but fergot de winder; but I heurn tell arterwards dat only two niggers got out uv dar wid a soun' head, an' dey didn't stop runnin' till Easter mo'nin'!

"I lit on de sod-muthers early in de game wid de staves uv de ash bar'l till dey wus meet fur repentunce, an' de nex' mo'nin' I sent 'em back to town whar I

foun' dey all had husban's livin' dat dey had quit fur er easier job. Wal, dey had to take 'em back.

"Now, sah, I wus keerful not to hurt Sally an' her mammy—dey wus both han'sum women, es I wus sayin'.

"I wus now rid uv de sod-muthers, but how to git rid uv Sally's mammy wus de nex p'int. I'd figured dat out too, case es I said, she wus a han'sum 'oman. De tacticks I used, boss, is whut'll s'prize you.

"Bout de thud night when I had her alone for a while on de leetle porch an' we wus waitin' fur Sally to git supper, fur she had gone to wuck in earnest arter she seed how handy I wus wid de ash bar'l, sez I:

" 'A good meny men have muther-in-laws dat am homely. I's mighty proud uv mine,' sez I, 'she is so han'sum.'

" 'Why, Washin'tun!' she sez, 'does you really think so?'

"I seed it tickled her, an' arter a while I slipped over closer an' sed:

" 'An' I nurver seed a muther-in-law wid sech b'utiful eyes as you is got', an' I took her han'.

"Dat wus mor'n she cu'd stan' on er col' collar an' you orter seed her light out—light out an' he'p git supper, too!

"I let it res' at dat. I's noticed dat too many fo'ks plants dey truck too fas' in de spring. An' at de same time I's nurver let er late frost keep me frum believin' it'll be summer by an' by.

"De nex' night I sot out on de po'ch ag'in arter er hard day's wuck an' I tuck my stan' whar I wus de

night befo' fur I knowed de ole doe allers crosses de creek at de same place. Sho 'nuff, by an' by heah she cum *tip-perty-tip—tipperty-tip.*

"An' all she wanted wus to ax me if I thought de weather wus gwine ter change! I sot up close ag'in an' sed:

" 'Sum times er man makes a great mistake by marryin' in too big a hurry.'

" 'How's dat?' she sed, tickled to death an' nestlin' up to me.

"Why,' sez I, 'he marries de gal an' den he fin's out whut 'ud suit him bes' wus de muther—shoots at de doe an' kills de fawn,' sez I, slippin' my arm aroun' her wais'.

"Up she jumps ag'in an' goes up mad lak an' big es a balloon.

" 'Ain't you 'shamed uv yo'se'f?' sez she. 'I's gwine right in an' tell Sally.'

"I knowed she wouldn't an' I set back an' chuckled. It wus all wuckin' to suit me an' I seed dar would soon be er complete separashun uv de chu'ch an' de state.

"Now, sah, you'll wonder des why I'd play es hefty an' han'sum a 'oman es she is sich er trick, but I 'cided dat one wife in de house am enuff in dat place.

"De thud night I had it fixed. I knowed she'd gone off mad, but I knowed a 'oman, arter one huggin', is like a dog burryin' a bone—he'll leave it fur awhile, but he's sho to cum back to it ag'in! I jes' waited an' let her cum back, fixin' my plans. I tole Sally to set down in one corner uv de po'ch in de dark an' keep

quiet—dat I had er s'prize fer her to sho' how her virtuous husban' wus bein' inticed by de Philistine.

"Dat wus enuff—she sot.

"I waited till dark fore I cum an' den I stomped aroun', washed my face an' han's, an' lit my pipe. An' heah she cum *tipperty-tip* an' all she wanted to kno' wus, *if de moon had riz!*

"I let her do de talkin', fur she wus ripe fur it, an' 'bout de time she tole me dat she lubbed me frum de fus' an' dat I orter married her stead uv Sally, I heerd a scufflin' in de co'ner,—Sally riz up, dar wus much excitement an' scatterment uv hair an' when it wus over dar wus nobody on dat place but me an' Sally, *an' I owned her.*"

How Uncle Wash Played Santa Claus

"NO, NO, Marse John," said the old man ,as he staggered in the other night, "don't git excited, it ain't de ku klux done it. I ain't seed eny uv dem sense I tried ter be smart an' own a few po' white fo'ks arter de war. No, sah, it ain't ku klux," and he tried to sit down, but gave it up and held on to the arm of a chair.

I was distressed for I had never seen the old man look like that. His head was bandaged in cotton batting and the eye he had left was trying to look at me through a slit in an arnica poultice.

"Sit down," I cried, reaching for a bottle of horse-medicine I kept for him in the sideboard.

"I can't, Marse John, I ain't got er spot lef' to res' on. I's branded on bofe hips wid de bar uv de cannon-cracker. If I tries to recumber longer-turdernal I lays on de bran' o' de sky-rocket, an' if I goes in fur horizontal recumbrance I gits on de spot lef' by torpedoes. Dar ain't but one spot lef' for me to res' on. If dars a iron hook in de wall jes' hang me up on it by de coat collar. I's be'n playin' Sandy Claws," he groaned—"tryin' to do lak white fo'ks an' lak de mos' uv dem kerried my religun too fur."

I did what I could to help him.

"Ah, Marse John, didn't you put a lettle too much turkentine in dat whiskey? Lord, but I's a wrick uv myse'f.

"Ef I had it my way," he went on, as he adjusted himself to a soft spot on the sofa, "dar jes' nurver would be ernuther Kris'mus. Us niggers copies ever' thing frum de white fo'ks, even borrowin' dey religgun. But I's blest ef it fits us eny mor'n it fits some uv dem, an' dis Kris'mus is jes' er nuesence an' er nonsense. Why, Sah, de gloomes' time uv dey year is jes' arter Kris'mus. When de foolishness and de fiahwucks is all over dar ain't nuffin lef' but tucky feathers, taxes and a tired stumic! You owe ever'body from de grocer's lergitermates to de ole-skin nabur dat saunt you a cyard headed, "De Foot-paths uv Peace," an' spen's de res' uv de year scrappin' wid you, kase you furgot to sen' him er fat pullit in return. Yo' taxes is due, yo' wood is out, yo' stumic is de only thing you knows you own, kase you kin feel dat's in revolt, an' you spen's de res' uv de year takin' to callermul an' tall timber.

"When you look 'roun', sah, it's jes' awful—twixt dried holly hung around, orange peelin', dirt, chicken feathers an' fish bone, de home looks lak er wolf-den at weanin' time, de chillun ruint fur wuck an' school, an' dey cough and cut up lak distempered colts. Yo' wife's made pincushens an' Kris'mus gif's till she broke you, and her constertushun an' gone to bed, dey cows got garget when dey oughter have milk, an' de cat you be'n tryin' to git rid of all de year bobs up wid er basketful uv kittins.

"Ain't it strange, sah, dat we celerbrates de buff-day uv sech er man in sech er way? He cum to tell us to be meek, an' we starts in fur mischief; he tells us to git

'ligun, an' we all git drunk; he tells us to give, an' we do it wid de hope uv gittin' mo' in return; he say be temprit, an' we start in to stuff. His whole life wus to entice us to heaven, an' we gits so happy at de very thought dat we 'megiately starts off to hell wid er pocket full uv fiahwucks fur fear de Devil didn't have enuff uv his own down dar!"

"Hold on, old man," I cried, "you have expressed just what I have been wanting to say all my life, but didn't have your flow of language! Excuse me while I go to my iron safe and get a bottle of Frank Chaffin's twenty-year-old—that horse medicine is not good enough for such sentiments. I've got the other in my safe and I am the only man who knows the combination."

"Ah, dat's better, Marse John," he said, a moment afterwards—"I's jes' be'n scorin' now—jes' watch me pace.

"An' swappin' dese Kris'mus gifs, Lord, it do make me tired! It's lak de time ole Marster tole ole Miss he sold his fine hound fur er thousand dollars, an' ole Miss wus so glad, kase she hated dat hound, he sucked de eggs. But she wus hot when she found out ole Marster had jes swapped him fur two five hundred dollar pups.

"Dat's Kris'mus givin 'all over.

"Kris'mus gif's now is jes' Kris'mus gittin', an' ever' man is jes tryin' to git his piece on earth an' de good will uv de other man long enuff to skin him endurin' de year.

"Now, dar's Dinah. She starts in right after Jinuary an' spen's de res' uv de year gittin ready fur Kris'mus,

an' no heathen in Aferca spen's a year uv harder wuck, whittlin' his god out uv a gum-stump wid er clam shell, den my 'ligus ole 'oman does fixin' fur Kris'mus. 'Save it fur Kris'mus, Wash,' is whut she chirps on frum Jinuary to Jinuary. She's tuck down de good ole sign I useter hav up in de house, '*Save a nickel and own a dime,*' an' now all she's got up is, '*Save it all fur Kris'mus*!' She drilled dis so in our chillun dat it lakter led to a 'vorcement wid our oldes' gal, Sally. Sally she married er nice nigger, but I soon seed sumpin' wus wrong. De nigger got mad an' started for a 'vorcement, an' when I gits to de bottom uv it, he said Sally nurver had kissed him yit. I gin dat gal a strappin' an' she 'fessed up and sed she luved de nigger, but she luved 'im so hard she wus savin' de fust kiss fur Kris'mus!

"I tell you, sah, it's jes got redikerlus de way we go on. Now heah's de way it wucks wid me:

"We spen's de summer an' fall raisin' er flock uv tuckies es Kris'mus gif's fur our frien's. Fur dese we gits back er armful uv Foot-paths uv Peace' cyards, er few po' pullits an' er lot uv candy made in Black Bottom an' painted by dat Irish Dago you calls Mike Angelo. Fur de fall lambs er two we sen's out mos'ly to de preachers, we gits back sumpin' dat looks lak wool, but it ain't, on de painted toys de chillun can't eat; an' fur de good gyarments Dinah makes an' distributes 'mong her frien's, she gits back cobweb collars dat you can't wear an' hankerchefs dat you wouldn't no mo' think uv blowin' your nose in then you would in a sifter.

"An' some fool 'oman had spent a half a year a-makin' 'em.

"O, we gits cyards er plenty. But I's noticed dat de ones dat sen's me de 'Foot-paths uv Peace' is allers in er scrap er fuss wid us, an' de very nigger dat led de prayer-meetin' an' sent us dat framed card, 'Our Faith is Our Fishiency,' 'loped wid our darter an' tuck all de blooded chickens wid him dat night. Eny way, he didn't leave us a fishiency—no, not even a minnery.

"But I got enuff now sense I played Sandy Claws last week."

"You played Santa Claus after all you have said?" I asked.

"Yes, sah, I played Sandy Claws, an' God knows I find his claws an' his paws, an' heah I pause," he winked, looking toward the sideboard.

"Now, " he said, after he tapped the bottle, "I didn't wanter play dat Sandy Claws, but de church saunt er committee uv one—a mighty hansum an' hefty 'oman to see me—Sis Tilly—an' she begged me to do it jes' fur her sake. Now, es I sed she wus hansum an' Dinah wus bizy makin' Kris'mus gif's outen cotton battin,' dog hair an' exselor, dat I knowed she wudn't kno' er side-steppin' waltz from er breakdown, so I 'cided to he'p Sis Tilly out. Dis led to a lot uv practicin' twixt me an' Sis Tilly at de church, an' by de time dat Kris'mus night cum I wus fitten an' good. All de sisterin he'p fix me up wid whiskers uv fiahwucks an' things on my back, an' when I wus finished dey said I wus hansumer den dey ever seed me befo',

an' I had 'em, boss, whar I could er started er church uv my own wid all dem sisterin es charter members. Two uv de bes' lookers kissed me kase de said dey nuver had kissed Sandy Claws in dey life. When it comes to inventin' er reason fur eatin' furbiddin' fruit don't ole Eve's gals all over de wourl' sho' dey pedigree? But Sis Tilly wus de one I wus arter, an' she sed she wus gwine ter kiss me arter de ball ef I acted ole Sandy well.

"De sisterin' had spent er week on de tree an' it looked mighty putty all lit up, new candles all over it an' in de house. De leetle niggers sot in de front pew waitin' fur ole Sandy lack dey knowed him all dey life, an' de church wus full an' all uv dem happy an' me de biggest man in de bunch, prancin' behind de stage wid Kris'mus in my bones an' feelin lak ole Tom Hal at de fust signs uv blue grass in de spring. Br'er Jones, de preacher, wus makin' er leetle talk an' tellin' de chillun de usual lies about ole Sandy, an' what er mighty man he wus, an' heah I cum prancin' out, lak er blin' horse over 'tater rows. I wus so dazed when I cum out I cu'dn't see nuffin but holly an' wool all over de house. But I seed Sis Tilly on de fus' bench wid er big smile on reddy to vote in de affermative.

" 'Dar's old Sandy! Dar's ole Sandy!' dey all shouted, an' sech er hurow!

"It wus up ter me to act, an' I done my bes', but I's reached dat stage, like all ole men, when I thinks I wants a whole lot mo' than I do, an' I out-acted myself. I ripped an ' I r'ared, I pranced an' I prared an' shuck my head at de chillun lak er billy goat, whilst ever'body howled an' de organ struck up.

"I's heerd, sah, dat Marse Horris Greely sed dat ef our foresight wus es good es our hin'sight we'd be better off by a dam sight, but dat is whar Marse Horris wus wrong—it wus my hin'sight dat went back on me, fur in prancin' an' backin' aroun' I backed dat pack o' fiahwucks into a lighted candle an' jes es de congregashun struck up dat good ole hymn, '*Shell I be kerried to de skies on flowery beds uv ease,*' I heerd sumpin' goin' off in my rear like de parked guns at Shiloh an' I started to de skies sho' nuff, an' nuffiin but de cealin' kept me frum gwine on! It looked like ter me fur ten minets I rid de air on fiah wucks. Two cannon crackers tuck off my boots, my pants went out de winder actin' as de tail uv er skyrocket, er torpedo scattered my stumic till de feathers looked lak snow fallin', I wus sot afiah from my shurt to my whiskers, an' ef I hadn't lit in de baptismal pool when I fell, God knows I w'udn't er bin heah to-night.

"I'd bin baptized twice befo, but I nurver seed eny candidate go into de water so willing agin. I's allers sed emershun wus de only way o' salvashun', an' now, thank God, I kno's it!

"But so he'p me, sah, dem fiahwucks wus so spiteful dey even kep' a poppin' under de watah. Dey sed it wus a sight ter see dey blue balls an' yaller balls cum bilin' outen dat dar baptismal pool an' sprinklin' Baptis' niggers wid Presbeterian doctrine.

"When I got up near 'nuff to peep over de brim, de mos' uv de congregashun wus under de benches, but Br'er Jones had be'n blowed up astraddle de stove pipe an' de benzine and bar's oil dat he'd greesed his hair

wid wus a-fiah. One uv my boots, wid er skyrocket in it, had caught Sis Tilly in de mouf jes es she opened it to led in de singin'. She c'udn't talk, but she wus gwine 'round makin' signal fur sumbody to git er boot jack and pull it out. Nearly ever nigger dar had caught er red ball or er yaller ball an' wus bilin' out uv doors an' winders cussin' Sandy Claws an' all his kin.

"By dis time I wan't lookin' fur yaller balls nor black balls, but I sot up to my neck in de watah beggin' fur a high ball! Some still had sense enuff lef' to put out de fiah wid watah frum de pool, an' when dey pulled me out I didn't have on nuffin but a dough face, some burnt whiskers an' patches uv chicken feathers an' er leetle skin in spots.

"No, nobody b'leeves in Sandy Claws dar now, nor in de preacher dat lied to 'em, nor in me, dat tried to find Sandy an' found his claws. De fac' is, de plan uv salvashun is mighty nigh blowed up in dat chu'ch."

Spotty-Cuss.

"My ole marster promised me
Ef I broke de re'kurd he'd set me free—
My ole marster de'd an' gohn—
He left Br'er Washin'tun hillin' up corn,"

THE old man now sleeps in a room in the barn. He says he wants to pass away in a manger with the smell of hay, and the maunching horses around him. He was born with them, he says, and he wants them around him when he dies. So I had him moved there over a year ago. Now, a friend gave me some game chickens at the same time—some of his fine war-horse breed. I thought all war-horses ought to be in a barn, so I gave them that building for their very own. I had been told that all summer they had been roosting on the head of the old man's bed. It is true I thought they were laying precious few eggs; but I have never permitted myself to doubt the old man's honesty. Now and then I had heard him say that a pullet had lain an egg in his hair or down his shirt collar, or deposited one at intervals in his shoes by the bedside, which he had appropriated, of course, "bekase she had acted so sassy," as he explained it. But of late that had ceased, and now he wanted a change made about their roosting. Because, as he had told it, in the middle of the night, last night, just as he was dreaming he was making a talk to the congregation at

Zion, a newly laid egg hit him squarely between his eyes. It was that "pesky pullet" again—this time on the roost above his head. He thought it wus a bad omen for Zion and a change must be made.

He had been in to tell me all about it. I had given him his "dram," and gone to tell the stable boy to move the chickens for the sake of Zion. When I came back he was sitting before the library fire humming the song above.

"It's jes' a little 'minder uv days past," he laughed. "You see, I cum along in de days uv thurrerbreds an' had all ole Master's horses. Ole Black Maria hilt de rekurd den, an' ole Marster tole me ef I raise him a hoss dat 'u'd beat it, he'd set me free. Wal, suh, fur thu'ty years I done my bes' t'inkin' ever' year I'd be a free man, but—

"My ole marster de'd an' gohn—
He left Br'er Washin'tun hillin' up corn,"

"I tell you, sah, breedin' winners is jes' lak ole Marster useter say about great men—some are bohn great, some ketch it by accerdent an' sum have it thrust on 'em whurther'r no. It's jes' dat way wid winners—dey are bohn fur some men, others git 'em by accerdent, an' still others try der bes' to keep away from 'em by breedin' to eny ole thing, an' lo an' behold—er world beater!

"Why, I knows lots uv rich men, sah, dat's ben breedin' fur er world beater for half a cent'ry, spent milyuns uv dollars an' yit de nighest dey ever cum to it is er pedergree or er pair uv Cordivan boots. Others

can't buy er dairy-wagon or buy er plow-hoss wid'out stumblin' on er winner. Den dar am others dat jes' can't git rid uv 'em arter fate fling 'em fur 'em. Old Tom Hal's owner told me he tried his bes' to gild de colt as a yearlin', but he had distemper so bad de man 'cided he wan't worth de vet's fee. An' dar am de mighty Creechus. Dey tells me his owner tried his bes' to have him shot as a yearlin' bekase he didn't see how he c'ud live till mornin', but dey cu'dn't find a gun in Ohio dat cud put a bullet through er Robert McGregor's haid. Oh, it's jes' dat way es I was tellin' you. All my life, as I was sayin', I wanted to breed er winner. 'Tw'ud set me free—but I nuver did breed but one, an' he wasn't a hoss, as I'll tell you dreckly.

"Uv course ever' man thinks he's got er wurl'-beater in his fus' boy, an' though I'd failed at hosses, I thort sho' I'd hit it dar. But the cu'is thing about chilluns," said the ole man gravely, "is dat dey seems to pan out in disproporshun to dey pe'rtness. De ugly, pond'rus, slow-growin' young uns make de big, brainy men, whilst de pretty, pe'rt 'uns dat we brag on so much, grows up an' nurver gits outen de Smart Ellic class!

"I married er lantern-jawed gal frum Giles County de fus' time. She didn't look lak she wus much, but I tell you, Marse John she flung genuses an' poets an' pie-eaters frum de tap uv de drum, an' dey cum wid de regularity uv a mother-in-law's visits, an' de certainty uv bad colds. She seems to have heurn tell uv er rule in 'rithmetic ole Marster useter tell me about, how sum things increase 'kordin' to de square uv de rad-

us-or sumpin' nu'ur lak dat—I didn't kno' uv course, so she sot in wid one boy de fus' yar, two de naixt, an' three de th'ud. So I had to put dat ar 'oman erside an' saunt 'er to her folks an' tole 'em de only safe place fer her wus housemaid in er nunnery. Wal, sah, I named dat fus' boy George Washin'tun—for Booker's daddy, you kno'—"

"George Washington had no children," I hastened to say.

"Ter be sho," said the old man, scratching his head dubiously. "You don't say so. Wal, to be sho! but dey was makin' sech a horay over dat ar Booker dat I 'lowed he sho mus' be George's son. I's heurn tell he sed in his book he was 'most too young when he was fus' born to 'member 'zactly who his daddy wus an' his mammy forgot to tell 'im befo' she died; but I notice how all de papers now call 'im 'de son uv our country, an' es I's allers heurn de ole man Washin'-tun called de Father uv our Country, it 'peared to me he cum by his entitlements nach'ly. An' den all three uv us is named Washin'tun," said the old man proudly.

"But I'll say one thing about my George: Dat ef he'd happen to be swappin' yarns in de back yard uv de Whitewash House wid de Preserdent, when de dinner bell rung, an' de Preserdent had slapped 'im on de back an' said: 'George, ole man, go wash yo' han's in de pan by de pump on de back po'ch, whar you see dat bar uv Gran'pa soap, an' wipe 'em on de rollin' towel, ef de kids hes lef' a clean spot on it, an' cum in an' break bread wid us, whilst we discuss how to wipe out de color line in de Sou'f an' pass on de peder-

gree uv de Jones family, d'ye think he'd a dun it?" asked the old man, brusquely.

"I don't see why," I said. "I think I should."

The old man shook his head: "Uh-er-r-r! You cain't see fur 'nuff, chile; It's de hoss dat can see furdest 'roun' de corner uv de last turn in de home stretch dat's apt to get to de wire fust."

" 'No,' George 'ud said, in his fine way—fur George was aigecated: 'Please 'scuse me, Mister Preserdent, from performin' eny evolushun wid de nigger in de North dat'll make eny mo' hemp grow fur 'em in de Sou'f. Yo' intenchuns am good, but you don't seem to kno' dat we don't keer so much 'bout de honor uv eatin' one dinner er year wid you. Whut's botherin' us is whar we gwine git de other three hundred an sixty-fo'! An' we're got to git 'em out uv de Souf.'

"But George died," he said sadly; "Genuses allers do. At de country fair he went ag'in de rekurd uv eatin' sixteen pies in two minutes, an' done it in 1: 59¼—Star Pointer's time. But it kil't him."

The old man wept. I had to give him another dram.

"It was 'long in '68, arter de war, dat I raised de raal wurl-beater I started to tell 'bout. Dem wus hard times den, when dey sot us free an' ole Marster quit feedin' us. De ole mare starved to de'th, de colt died —ever'thing died but de 'leben chillun we had, de house dorg an' er speckled shote we called Spotty-cuss. Now, Spotty-cuss wus bred for bacon, but ole granny Natur is mighty kind, an' when she changes de kondishun uv animals she changes dey instinct. De Lord tempers de wind to de shorn lam', an' when dat

shote found he want gwin'ter git no mo' to eat, an' if he survived at all he mus' do it by out runnin' de free niggers, he quit takin on bacon an' went in fur speed. From a fat, roun' Buckshur uv de good ole slavery days, he turned into er long snout, two years, er roach back an' long tail an' fo' cat hammed legs that cu'd jump er ten rail fence eny moon light night, or run 'cross er county in a close place. He had de mos' deceptive trot in de wurl'.

"It wus fun to see 'im sorter trot er long lak he wus lookin' fur acorns, an' cover twenty miles er hour, an' ef er nigger got at 'im he'd just say, 'Whoof!' an' dat coon would have to jedge by de soun' uv his voice which way he went through de air.

"Long 'bout dat time ole Marster got inter er 'spute wid er man named Stallins 'bout which hoss cu'd beat —ole Marster's or Stallin's. It wus in de fall uv de year an' it looked lak starvashun for me dat winter, when one day jes befo' de fall fair I seed dis stuck up in a tree by de road," and the old man pulled out an old print, yellow with age, and I read aloud:

"A CHALLENGE."

"The Honorable Jere Stallings will match his three-year'old filly, Arcalia, against any horse in Maury Co.—play or pay—for $500, fall fair 1868.

"N. B.—Or anything else on four legs that wears hair!"

The old man laughed. "Now dat End Bee per'd ter me to let Spotty-cuss in an' I seed my chance. I tell

you, boss, I's lived er long time, but de main thing in dis life is ter see de chances dat come. You may be sho' dey'll come.

"Wal, I started at once to train Spotty-cuss. Now dat wus easy 'nuff—he had de speed an' all I had to do wus to keep 'im hongry. I put 'im in er log crib wid no cracks, fur he cu'd go through two inches 'an' gin 'im er leettle hot bran mash ever other day in slop. When he got too hongry I'd have de kids rub 'im down wid corn-cobs 'twell he went to sleep in de sunny corner. I's heurn tell dat sev'ral drivers do dat way now to git speed, but I first thort it up.

"When I went to feed 'im two uv de kids would take 'im off in a box a mile from home; den I'd pull out my watch an' holler: '*Pig-ee-whoo-up*! *Whoo-up!* an' time 'im es he cum. At de soun' uv my voice he'd light out—de boys sed all dey would heah wus his tail crack es he wen' through de air, an' de naix minnit he'd be at home wid his nose in de slop-bucket.

"De white folks was so busy 'sputin' fur a place de day uv de fair dey don't pay no 'tenshun to me an' de kids when we tuck Spotty-cuss in his box to de haid uv de stretch. Dar wus half a dozen hosses in, 'sides ole Marster's an' Stallins'. De war had ruined all de 'roun' tracks, so dey had dis laid off straight away down in a meador bottom. De boys sot de box at one end wid de hosses in line, an' I stood jes' beyant de wire wid de slop an' bran mash. He hadn't had none fur nigh two days an' wus hongry ernuff to eat er keg uv b'iled gimlits. At de crack uv de gun, when, de hosses

started, de kids turned 'im loose jes' es I hollered, '*Pig-ee-whoo-up*!' an' heah he come!

"De fus' thing he done was run under de nigh hoss an' take de pole, an' frum dere on he led de whole gang home, me hollerin' '*Pig-ee-whoo-up*!' de riders hollerin' an' whippin', an de folks goin 'crazy ter see a razor-back beat thurrerbreds.

"I have never seed nuthin run es he did. He jes bored a hole thru' de air. An' ole Marster sez, he come so fas' he tho'rt it wus war times agin, fer dat horg made a noise through de air lak a bomb-shell, his tail poppin on de end lak de fuse. He beat 'em er mile an' a half in de mile an' when de crowd seed it an' caught on, you nuver seed sech laffin.'

"Wal, sah, Stallin's didn' wanter see it dat way, but de la'f wus on 'im, de crowd wus fer me, an' I went up an' claimed de money under dat End Bee. Dis made Stallins red-hot an' he 'lowed he kick us both off de groun's.

"Now, de bes' frien' a nigger has is de white man dat's onc't owned 'im. Ole Marster drawed his gun an' sed ef he touch arry one uv us dar w'ud be a fun'ral; dat his filly was naixt ter Spottycuss, an' ef he didn't claim de money nobody else c'ud.

"Dat settled it, an' dey paid it ter me, an' dat," said the old man proudly, "gin me my start, thanks to ole Marster's grit an' Spotty-cuss' speed!"

MISS ANT'NETTE'S PROVIN'.

IT was a sharp gallop across the pasture and a quick turn into the woodlot.

"And now we must run for it, Antoinette—for the the old man's cabin—or we will get a drenching for our laziness. So here goes, good filly—show the clouds your heels." And she did, the sly witch. This was just to her mind. She was too full of golden running blood, mingled with the silver strains of the saddler, not to love a good run whenever she got a chance. Nothing suited her better than to run through the blue grass lot, where the turf, pressed by her shapely hoofs, rose like a sponge under them and gave to her bound the elasticity of a fawn's.

The rain came down in big drops as we cleared the ditch. I saw the shower behind us as I looked back, and felt a thickening of the mist in my face. But the next instant the filly was bolting like a quarter horse across a level plot, swept perilously swift through the narrow little gate that stood open near the cabin door. and, with a quick snort that scattered half a dozen chickens which had run under the old darky's shed, out of the rain, she came to a halt under the big shed, tossing and shaking her head gleefully, and half rising on her hind feet, as if she longed to get out and try it over again. But the rain was pouring down by this time, and the old darky had run out, and now stood at the filly's head, true to his raising, while I dismounted.

"Hi, hi!" he laughed, "but wa'n't she comin'briefly 'cross dat pastur? Didn't she split dem rain-drops wide? Oh, she's er darling, is dis Ant'nette! Jes lak her grandam by de same name. My, I jest nachelly luvs ennything wid dat name. But cum in an' dry yere cloze. Dinah's got de fiah hummin' by now. We seed you comin' an' Dinah feered you gwi' git wet, but I 'lowed you w'udn't. Sez I: 'A good hoss am better'n a rubber coat in a rainstorm, and dat's what you had.'

"I know whut I'm talking' 'bout,' he added, "'fur I raised her grandam—thurrer-bred mare—belonged to Miss Ant'nette, my young mistress. De best filly dat ever stood on iron or swum er flood."

I smiled at the ambiguity of old Wash's remarks, and started in the cabin to dry my boots and hear his daily report of the lambs and calves, for he tended to both on the farm.

We had reached the cabin door, and in his eagerness to tell me all about the filly's grandma, he ran over his little grandchild standing in the doorway, watching us in open-mouthed wonder. The child screamed, and the old man indignantly slapped it across the cabin floor, where it rolled itself up in straw tick and smothered its yells. A moment later, it had its head out, as if nothing had happened, and was listenting with evident satisfaction to hear what would happen next.

"Hit makes me mad," said the old man, apologetically, "to see de no-mannered ways uv dis heah young generashun uv niggers. Dey stan' an' gape at

white folks, lak dey nurver seed eny thing uv de kind befo.'

"Does you think de gen'man am a white elerfant, sah?" he shouted ironically at the straw tick.

A short, apologetic wail came up from the straw, and then hushed in a most sudden, inquisitive manner.

"Mebbe you think he's er brass ban' an' er ban'-waggin," he shouted again, with sarcasm.

"I tell you, sah," said the old man, addressing himself to me, "dat boy's mammy was aigucated an' you sees whut de offspring cum to. Ef dis thing keep on an' de nigger race git a leetle more aigucashun, it won't have sense ernuf lef ter take keer uv itself."

"But I started to tell you 'bout Miss Ant'nette," he said, and then, going to the old mantle, he took down a rare old daguerreotype and put it in my hands.

It was a beautiful piece of art, the work of the famous old daguerreotyper, Brady, of New York, and as rare as beautiful, one of those exquisitely natural things which modern photography with all its science, has never yet approached.

A young girl of twenty, in a neatly turned riding habit, as simple as it was elegant, looked out at me from under a large, full hat, with eyes as romantic as a shadowy moon, and yet as full of love and light and warmth as the stars. Around the hat circled a most splendid ostrich feather—one giant and beautiful plume —which fell over the hat and half circled around her graceful neck, in a profusion of rich and glorious splendor. Her face was pure Southern, with a classic, lilting fullness and charming *hauteur* that was queenly.

The old man greatly enjoyed my surprise and the unconcealed admiration in my face, and he finally burst out enthusiastically:

"Dat's de filly I wus tellin' you erbout, Gord bless her sweet soul! Dat's Miss Ant'nette, my young mistress. De same dat de mare wus named fur," and he could hardly contain himself in his anxiety, in his own inimitable way, to tell it all.

"When de war broke out, it was pull Dick, pull Devil, es to which army should have Middle Tennessee. When Donelson fell, de Yankees had us, an' when Bragg went into Kentucky, why we jes' nachully had dem.

"An' de raids—Gord, sah, I nurver got as tired uv raids in my life! It wus fus' Wilder, an' den Forrest, an' den Wilson, an' den Wheeler, twell it looked lak our corn crib nurver would get any rest. Meny an' meny er night I've gohn to bed an' didn't know when I wake up whether I be er Yankee or er Johnny Reb. Gord bless your soul, honey, I didn't want er hurt nobody's feelin' an' git up no fight, an' I allers made it er pint to ergree wid de side dat hilt de fort on Duck River, an' had dey guns sorter pinted t'words my cabin. Ef it wus Marse Abe Lincoln's guns, I wus fur Marse Abe, an' ef it wus Marse Jeff Davis' guns, I wus fur Marse Jeff.

"But Miss Ant'nette didn't change! Gord, sah, no! She wus rebel frum de sassy-lookin' turn uv her he'd to de sole uv her leetle feet dat twinkled lak daisies when she run over de lawn. An' as fur her bein' feered! Lord, she jes' turned up her nose at de

whole Yankee army! She wasn't feered uv nothin', altho' she looked lak er lily in er ball room.

"We all thout she an' Marse Luchus wus gwin'ter marry befo' de war broke out. I can't tell when de time wus dey wa'n't sweethearts. Dey plantashuns jined an' dey went to skule togedder an' dey grewed up togedder, an' jes' nachelly luv each yudder, an' wus made fur each yudder, lak sunshine an flowers. Wy, sah, when Marse Luchus wus er leetle boy, he useter write poltry to Miss Ant'nette, an' send it on er silver waiter by a nigger boy wid de Chester monergram. I disremember sum uv dat poltry now," said the old man, repeating very slowly and with much misgivings:

'Ef I luved you lak you luve me,
No knife could cut our luv in two.'

"Now, ain't dat good poltry fur er boy?" he asked.

"Quite," I smiled. "It's a wonder they had not captured him for some of the magazines. Its fully up to their standard."

"No, no," said the old man quickly, "dey cudn't captur' him! De Yankees tried dat. Dat's whut I's gwin'ter tell you 'bout. I 'clar ter goodness, I don't know whut luvers would do ef dey cudn't quarl ever now an' den. I don't b'leeve dar would ever be er marriage in de wurl. Fur quar'ls seem to act on luv lak pepper an' saltpeter on fatnin' horgs; er kinder change in de diet, you know—sumpin to make 'em eat mo' when dey git back to dey legitermates."

"Now, heah wus Miss Ant'nette an' Marse Luchus

gwine on luvin' each yudder lak two leetle patterges all dey life twell jes' es de war broke out. Den on de eve uv dat fool war, when it look lak Gord dun shet de pastur' gates uv heab'n on de wurl, an turn his back on us, an' dun gohn off in the medders to feed his lambs an' sheep up dar, an' let let dorgs and wolves fight it out on de outside, heah dese two chilluns, dat luve each udder hard ernuf to die fur it, jes' up an' gits mad an' parts in mizery, when de chances wus dey'd nurver see each udder ergin.

"Hit happened at de ball at Miss Ant'nette's de night befo' de soljers marched to de war. All de young officers wus dar, to dance de farewell dance, befo' dey went into dat dance uv death, an' hit wus a pooty pictur, ef dar ever wus one. De plumes an' unerforms an' silk dresses an' sashays, an' low-necks, an' turn-yer-partners an' gold and lace promenade—uv dat cump'ny, Gord, sah, Miss Ant'nette wus de queen, an' Marse Lushus was King.

"He'd bin 'lected Cap'n uv his comp'n'y, an' ef dey urver wus er bohn soljer, he wus de one!

"Dar wus a young man at dat ball Marse Lushus didn't lak—he nurver had laked him—tho' his folks wus rich an' he had fine cumpa'ny manners an' all dat. He wa'nt our kinder white folks, dat's all, an' Marse Lushus knowed it, an' he axed Miss Ant'nette not to waltz wid dat kinder man. Miss Ant'nette sorter laf an' say:

" 'Luchus, you ain't jelus uv Mister Brice, are you?' an' she give him er look dat would make de heart beat in a marble man.

" 'I'm jelous uv nobody, Ant'nette,' he said proudly. An' then he whisper'd in her leetle year, 'fur I wear de ring an' de promise uv de only queen in de wurl.'

"Miss Ant'nette blush an' say: 'An', sir knight, would you not have your queen beluved?'

" 'It ain't dat,' sed Marse Lushus, 'I don't blame ennybody fur doin' whut I can't help doin' myself—luvin you,' he said, 'but I don't want you to waltz wid Mister Brice.

" 'O, ho,' say Miss Ant'nette, wid er leetle laf, 'I see; you willin' nuff fur me ter be queen, but you want er be king, too.'

"Marse Luchus flushed an' looked sorter vexed.

" 'De questun uv whuther or not I shall waltz,' she went on, sorter 'tarmined lak, 'I will decide fur myself, wid mama's consent; but ef you kno' Mister Brice is not er gent' man, I think you should tell me.'

"Marse Luchus turned quick es er shot. Then he sed, 'I could not es er gent'man tell you mo' in his absence than I tole him ter-day ter his face—a dastard in peace an' er tra'ter in war,' I knowed whut I wus sayin', he said, 'an' he dared not resent it.'

" 'But I've already promised ter waltz wid 'im,' said Miss Ant'nette ergin, sorter 'tarminedly.

" 'Ant'nette,' said Marse Lushus, slowly and sternly, 'ef you waltz wid dat man I'll tell you good-bye fur ever.'

"Dat wus er bad break fur Marse Lushus ter make, fur Miss Ant'nette cum frum stock es proud an' 'tarmined es his'n. 'Sides dat, it put her in de

light uv bein' de wooer, an' I'll nuver furgit de proud an' ladylak way she cum back at 'im:

"'An so you hang the desterny uv our luve on er threat, would you? So be it, Cap'n Chester. You will yet learn dat luve can be led but nurver driven!' An' then she turn an' bow lak de queen she wus to dat Mr. Brice, who cum up jes' den ter claim his waltz, an' den she jes' waltzed erway wid 'im.

"Fur er minnit I seed Marse Lushus turn white es er stone, an' I thout he'd faint, spite uv de grit I knowed wus in 'im. Den he wheeled in er millertery way an' turned his back on de ballroom an' he beckin' ter me an' I followed 'im. He went in de sittin' room, sot down by de table, tuck out paper an' pencil, an' writ on de paper. Den he pulled off er ring he had on his finger—er plain gold ring—put de ring in de note, riz an sed:

" 'Carry dis ter yore young Mistis.' An' as I bowed ter go, he hilt out his han' ter me in his frank way an' sed, "Good-bye, Uncle Wash. My comp'ny will march at daylight.'

"When I got back to de ball-room, de waltz wus over, an' I foun' Miss Ant'nette settin' in de bay winder an' dat mister man, talkin' es onconsarned es ef nothin' hed happened. I stop an' bowed befo' her es perlite es I cud. She beckin me ter cum up. Den I axed her, sorter low, ef I wus ter deliver her er note I had fer her. She laf an' sed, 'of course,' an' I handed it ter her all crumpled up 'round de ring. She didn't kno' de ring wus dar, an' it fell out. Mister Brice picked it up er kinder beamin' smile on his face an' han' it ter her.

She wus deadly pale but she laf' an' thank im' an' ax im' ter 'scuse her whilst she red de note.

"When she finished it she wus paler still, but game ter de las' fur she smile es ef nothin' wus de matter, say sumpin' pleasant to Mr. Brice, an' han' 'em both back ter me wid er laf' an' say: 'Thank you; you may go now an' have 'em bofe fur yore trouble,' an' I got 'em ter dis day," said the old man, as he looked in a small box behind the daguerreotype on the mantel, and brought forth a plain gold ring and a crumpled note.

"I disremember de note," he said, "but hits mighty pooty poltry, an' I'll ax you ter read it ter me."

I took it and read aloud.

"From the rose you have brushed its sweet sparkle of dew,
From the peach the soft satin that gave it its hue;
You have touched all too roughly the butterfly's wing,
And shaken the bloom where the honey bees cling;
You have breathed on the bubble that young love had blown,
And the rosebud of love from its stem you have torn.
You have wakened the sleeper ere his dreaming was through,
And so my fair waltzer, gay waltzer, adieu!"

"De naixt mornin,' sho, 'nuff, Marse Luchus was gohn, but dat Mister Brice wa'n't gohn, an' es de war went on an' he made fus one excuse an' den ernuder, I gun ter think Marse Luchus 'bout sized 'im up right,

an' when he turned tra'ter, I *knowed* Marse Luchus wus right.

"An' I clar ter goodness I lak ter got mad wid Miss Ant'nette fur de way she kerried on wid 'im. She rid wid 'im an' went wid 'im t'well it got ter be de sayin' in der county dat she gwine marry 'im. But I seed thru' dat. She wus jes' too proud ter let enybody kno' she keers for Marse Luchus, fur aldough she laf an' flirt wid dat mister-man, after a battle, when de news cum dat Marse Luchus wus mighty nigh dead, I foun' her one night on der front porch all huddled up in der dark an' er cryin' ter herself.

"Wal, suh, den cum de raids I wus tellin' 'bout. De Yankees tuck de town fust, an' I'll nuver furgit de day I seed my fust Yankee. It was Gineral Wilder hisself, er fine-lookin' man on er fine hoss, an' when he rid up ter our gate ter ax me 'bout de road an' I seed his blue unerform an' dat de wus er Yankee, I lak ter drapped in my tracks, I wus so 'stounded! Wy, man-er-live, he looked just lak our folks! I'd heurd so much 'bout 'em twell I thort dey wus furrin kinder creeter, er cross 'twixt eriginal sin an' de devil wid horns an' skaley backs, an' all dat. But when I seed dat nice-lookin' gen'man an' heurn 'im talk so nice an' perlite, I'lowed den an' dar dat Yankees wus white folks, too, an' I sed ter myself,' dis gwine er be er white folks war, an' er long an' bloody one.'

"But one mohnin' dey wus a terribul clatter an' shootin' down de rode. Our folks wus makin' er raid, an' Marse Luchus an' his comp'ny hed rushed thru de town, driv de Yankees cross de bridge over de ribber,

burnt all de millertery stores, an' wus erway befo' de big force cud cum up ter de rescue.

"Bimeby, I heurd er turribul clatter an' runnin' down de pike, an' heah dey cum by our house, Marse Luchus in de lead—gallopin', gallopin'!

"Dat mister-man wus in de parlor den, but when Miss Ant'nette seed Marse Luchus at de haid uv his comp'ny, fur he'd now riz to be kunnel, dough he didn't have but er han'ful wid 'im dat day, she didn't pay no mo' tenshun ter dat Brice man den ef he bin er poodle dorg, an' her eyes danced, an' she'd laf er leetle an' cry sum, an' all de time she would be sayin' sorter low, " Oh, ain't he gran'! Ain't he gran'!

"I seed dey wus headed fur de bridge over Big Bigby, an' I knowed de bridge wus burned, an' dat ole Bigby wus on er reg'lar t'ar, an' would swim er regerment, 'na Marse Luchus didn't kno' it. I'd heurn, too, dat on 'count uv sum war killin' dey had sot er price on Marse Luchus' head, an' would pen 'im up dar an' kill 'im. So I run down ter de fence an' es Marse Luchus passed by I hollered out:

" 'Marse Luchus, de bridge over Big Bigby is burned, an' de creek is boomin'! Strike 'cros he fiel' fur de upper ford! Strike 'cross he fiel' fur de bridge on de yudder side!' An' dey wheeled an' tuck me at my wurd.

" But when Marse Luchus went by, I seed his hoss wus shot an' de blood wus jes' streamin' frum his flank, an' I knowed he cudn't mo'r'n git over Bigby befo' his hoss boun ter give out, an' I run back ter de house an tole Miss Ant'nette.

"When I tole her, suh, I seed de jig wus all up wid dat mister-man. She run ter ole Marster an' cotch his han' an' cried: 'O, don't let 'em ketch 'im, papa!' An' befo' ole Marster cud say enything she turned ter me an sed: 'Saddle Ant'nette quick!'

"Ant'nette wus her saddle mare—three-quarters thurrerbred an' de yudder quarter better bred, an' she wus de proudes', gracefulles creeter dat ever kerried er mistis; no man had erver bin on her back an' her mouf wus as tender es de mouf uv luve, an' her sides es soft as de cheek uv er gal, an' her legs es cordy an' hard es er hoss uv bronze. Run? She cud run lak er quarter hoss, an' stay at it lak er steam engine.

"I wus so shaky I cudn't hardly saddle de mare! It jes' peered lak my fingers all got stiff at onct, lak dey do in winter time. I cudn't hardly buckle de girth, an' my legs lak ter shake me offen de groun' but dat mare seem to kno' what wus up, an' dat I wus rattled an' no 'count, an' she jes' rubbed her sweet leetle nose ergin me so playful, lak es ef she'd say: '*Be cool, ole man, an' put de saddle on; I'll do de res'.*'

"In er minnit Miss Ant'nette cum runnin' out, dressed jes' as you see her dar, in dat ridin' habit, an' de big hat wid de ostrich plume. Her eyes look lak deep wells when you look down an' see de stars shinin' in de bottom, an' her face wus all erglo' wid de glory dat cums frum doin 'things. I'd mounted her up too often ter waste much time at dat, an' in er minnit I had de mare by de rein wid one han', whilst I hilt de yudder han' low down ter de groun'. Miss Ant'nette

put her leetle foot in it, I gin her er slight toss, an' she wus in de saddle.

" 'Now, foller me on ernudder hoss,' wus all she sed, an' she wheeled an' galloped over de lawn.

"I bridled ernudder hoss' an' wus after her, bare-back, in er minnit. But es she rid ercross de lawn, it looked lak de road jes' swarmed wid blue-coats, thunderin' down de pike on Marse Luchus trail. Miss Ant'nette see 'em an' make er quick spurt fur de gate. But dey seed er' an' rushed ter de gate ter shet her off. Dey got dar fust, an' thinks I, 'Dey'll head her, sho'; but she seed de move quick, an' turned de mare's head sorter cater-cornered straight fur de rock wall. It wus er big high wall, an' de calv'ry spurred down de pike ter head her off ergin. I hilt my breaf when I seed de mare fly at dat wall, but I knowed Miss Ant'-nette might, nigh bohn in de saddle, an' I knowed her hoss lak de cap'n knows his ship, an' jes' at de proper time she felt de mare's mouf fur der rise an' dey riz es gracefully over de wall es er swaller skims over de sea an' rizes to de big waves in her path. De naixt minnit she had settled lak er ship, an' wus runnin' lak er gray-houn'. When she hit de pike, de soljers wa'n't ten yards behin' her, spurrin' fur all dey wus worth, an' shoutin':

" '*Halt! Halt! Stop her! Ketch her!*' An' one big feller wus so anxious to ketch her, he spurred wid bofe legs an' beat his hoss wid his cap an' rid right up 'side his cap'n, crowdin' Miss Ant'nette fur all dey hosses wus wurf. An' when de soljer dat wus ridin' by de Cap'n seed Miss Ant'nette leavin' 'em behind, an'

w'udn't surrender, he pulled out his pistol to shoot at 'er, but befo' he cud shoot, de Cap'n hisself brough de butt end uv his saber down on his head an' knocked 'im clear outen de saddle, an' I heurs 'im say:

" 'You coward! Would you shoot a woman?'

"An' jes' 'bout dat time I seed Miss Ant'nette get down to business. She brough dat ostrick plume down on er flank dat had nurver felt even de wight uv er feather befo', Gord bless her sweet soul, dat mare jes' sailed erway befo' dem clumsy calv'ry plugs lak er sassy little pattege-hen befo' er flock uv noisy crows.

" 'Great Gord!' I sed to myself, "She's headed fur de burned bridge, stid of de ford;' an' de naixt instant de officer gin er comman':

" 'To de ford! She can't cross de creek! We'll git 'im yit!' An' den I knowed dey'd set er price on Marse Luchus' head an' 'twas him dey wus arter.

"Now, de ford wus two miles off, an' de bridge wus only er mile down de pike, an' when I seed 'em strike fur de ford, I galloped down de pike ter try an' stop Miss Ant'nette. I run hard es my hoss cud go, but when I got to de hill an' look down at de burnt bridge er quarrter uv er mile below, I seed Miss Ant'nette plunge in de creek jes' below de mill dam, striking de water on de current side, an' it whirlin' de mare 'round an' 'round, lak er top. Sez I, 'My Gord, she'll drown!' An' I galloped down an' plunged my hoss in. too, fur I knowed I cud swim.

"But, Gord bless her sweet soul, dat mare wus es good in water as she wus on lan', an' es soon es she ketch her bearin's she struck out fur de yudder bank,

tremblin' lak er leaf, but stanch es er tree, snortin' lak er wild thing, but stiddy an' cool es de nurve er death! In er minnit she bounded up de bank, shook herself lak er wet dorg, an' flew ter whar I seed er clump uv horsemen standin' 'round de leader, whilst he stood over his dead hoss wid drawn pistol, ter make his last stand. De naixt instant Miss Ant'nette wus dar, an' es Marse Luchus cought her out frum de saddle, he kissed her befo' all dem men an' sed:

" 'My own darling! How could I ever have doubted you?' An' den de pale went out en her face fur de fust time on dat ride, an' de mohnin' cum in es she lookes up in his eyes, whilst he pressed her to his heart, an' she sed:

" 'Dear heart, luve can be led, but not driven!'

"Den she give de mare to Marse Luchus, an' in er jiffy de men put his saddle on her, an' wid er cheer dat shook de hills dey rid away.

"I had put Miss Ant'nette's saddle on my hoss, and she wus mounted, ridin erlong when de Yankees rid up, an' when dey seed whut she had dun, the Cap'n hissef shouted:

"'Three cheers, boys, fur de gallant girl an' her mare'!

"An 'es dey give it wid er will Miss Ant'nette bowed her pretties' an' smile her sweetes' much es ter say:

" 'Much erbleeged ter yer, gen'mun, but I's proved this day where my heart is.' "

THE RESURRECTION OF BROTHER WASHINGTON

I HAD not seen the old man for several months, but I supposed he was still prospering on his little farm, when he walked in the other day without knocking, took his seat by the fire, and casually remarked that March was always a bad month on rheumatism.

"Why, how are you, old man?" I said, laying down my pen and seeing him for the first time. "I haven't seen you for several months."

"No, I don't reck'n you is," he said quietly, "an' de reason is, I ain't seed myse'f—I's been dead!"

"What!" I exclaimed—"dead—are you joking?"

I looked at him closely, but I saw no evidence of insanity—nothing to indicate that he had yet reached his dotage. However, I thought it best to pass him something for his rheumatism. He quaffed it off so naturally that I knew he was all right and would tell it in his own way.

"Enything happened ter speak of sense I be'n dead?" he asked, indifferently enough, as he smacked his lips and wiped them on the back of his hand.

I was anxious to hear how he had died, but I knew any eagerness on my part would spoil it, so I replied:

"Why, no, old man—nothing new. But you have heard of Jupiter Pluvius, perhaps, and his home above the clouds. Well he has kept busy this spring with his watering pot."

"Heard of 'im?" asked the old man, with a show of wrath—"why, I knowed 'im—he was a blue-gum nigger—that Jupiter was— that c'u'd pick five hundred pounds uv cotton in er day, an' he run off wid my secon' wife an' jined de Yankees. But he didn't live whar you placed de rickerlischun uv dis cohabitashun—he lived up on Bear Creek. No, I got no hard feelin's about it—for, onbeknownst to hisse'f he done me er great favor. No, I ain't got nothin' erg'in' him, nur de Yankees, nur'r."

"I guess not," I said, "for since the Spanish war we are all Yankees now."

"All Yankees now? Jes' lemme tell you, sonny, dah's one dat ain't. No, sah, I am a S'uthern gen'man, an' I still b'leeves de nigger was made to belong to somebody dat 'ud feed 'im an' mek 'im beehave. All Yankees now? Boss, I sho' am 'shamed uv you! Well dat's all right, but I b'leeves I told you 'bout co'rtin' dat 'ar widder—"

"You got her, didn't you?"

"Boss, did you urver kno' enybody to go after er widder an' not get her? I's got jes' one rule fur co'rtin'—set up close, agree on all p'ints, an' dat'll fetch on luve. Never 'spute wid er widder, 'specally ef you're c'ortin' her. Wait twell you're marri'd.

"Did you ever notice, boss, how cu'is a widder is about dat ur c'ortin' bis'ness? So diff'unt frum er gal. Now, when you co'rt er gal, she ain't gwine say nuffin' fur er long time. She let you co'rt her an' co'rt her, an' sum day, when she fin' she luves you, she'll jes'

thro' her arms aroun' yo' neck an' say, 'Darlin', I am your'n—take me!'

"But wid er widder, nobody ain't nurver got one uv 'em to say 'yes' yit—but dey manage to git dar all de same.

"An' dat wus de way wid dis heah widder I co'rted. De fus' night I went to see her she 'lowed she hated de very groun' I walked on, yet she lemme hol' her han' all de time. De nex' night I was wuss'n p'izen, yet she lemme squeeze her. De third time I was meaner n' dog-fennel, yet I was good enuff to hug her. De nex' time I cum she 'lowed I wus de mos' contempt'us, po', ignoble, bandy-legged has-been dat ever was, an' stell I sho' did kiss her. De las' night she fix me—I didn't think she'd have me to save my life, an' lak er fool I begged her wuss'n a little weaned calf, beggin' fur milk. Dat wus jes' what she wus layin' fur, an' so, entirely onbeknownst to me, she had de preacher wid de license dar hid in de closet, an' I sw'ar ter goodness, boss, befo' de cock crow twice dat 'ar 'oman had marri'd me thrice!

"An' den I died," he added solemnly. "Yes, boss, I died dead, too. You see, it all happen' at de weddin' supper. You see, boss, de ole man had allers been used ter drinkin' sho' nuff licker, but dat night dey dose me up wid er konkoction uv pine-top, asserfederty an' buzzard's bre'f, an' 'fo' I knowed it I wus dead. Wy, boss, dey burried me on de fus' Sat'd'y arter de secon' Sunday in Jinuary, an' I didn't rise ergin 'twell de Chusday arter de secon' Sunday in March, an' ef dat

whisky hadn't er bin es good in its raisin' grace es 'twus in its fallin' grace, I'd er bin dar yit.

"Wud you like to kno' what a man sees, an' how he feels arter he's dead, boss?"

"Would I?" I gave the old man another dose of the heaven-brewed to help him along.

"Wal, hit's about de cu'isest feelin' dat ever wus felt," he said, after a while, "One minnit you am livin' an' de nex' you am travlin' 'long de road to Jurdan; an' you can't he'p yo'se'f to save yo' life. You can't stop, you can't set down, you can't turn back. You jes' seem to be drawed along lak you wus standin' on er slidin' sidewalk run on undergroun' cables. But de road is buterful. Flowers bloom all erroun' you. Birds sing in de sunshine on gold trees, an' fishes swim in lakes uv melted di'monds. Inste'd uv bein' outdoors an' breathin' air, you 'peer to be movin' erlong under de bright roof uv er cut-glass house, or in er big bottle uv rarerfied perfume, wid de sun er blazin' stopper in de roof.

"I didn't know whar I was gwine to, an' I didn't keer—all I know wus I wus gwine, thank Gord!

"But, bimeby, everything stop whar two roads met, an' I know'd one of 'em went to heab'n, but I c'u'dn't say which one to save my life, I got down on my knees an' prayed fur light, but no light cum, an' 'stid uv it I heurd all de little birds singin' in de gold trees all aroun' me:

" 'If you foller the road of sorrer an' sin,
An' don't pray fur light in de wurl' you am in,
No use fur to pray in de nex'.'

"Dat mos' par'lyze me, boss, an' I'd a gi'n enything ef I hadn't spent so much time aroun' race-tracks whilst I wus alive an' had spent mo' uv it lookin' for dis heah track, an' tryin' to fin' out which road to take. Dar dey bofe lay, jes' erlak, shinin' in de glow uv eternity. An' yit de very silence seem ter speak in thunder tones, an' de stillness wus louder dan de noise uv battle. It all depended on de path I tuck.

"Bimeby, I thort uv Ole Marster's little boy dat I seed die so long ago, an' dat I useter nuss an' carry in my arms, an' uv all de little chillun I seed bohn one day, an' die de nex', an' I got down on my knees in de golden dust uv dat 'ar road an' I look fur ter see ef dar wus eny baby tracks dar, fur I knowed whar de baby tracks wus, dat was de road dat leads to heab'n."

The old man stopped, and I saw him brush away a tear. He had said something as great as Shakespeare's and I, myself, had to take a turn around the room to stop before the picture of a little curly-head over the mantel, and listen again for the prattle of a laughter which began one spring with a bird's note and ended with the first snow in a new-made grave.

When I came back the old man was laughing. Tears —smiles—twins that dwell in the secret chambers of the heart, and they join hands so quickly at times!

"Bimeby," he went on, "I look up de road, an' heah cum ole Kunnel Ketchun er-splittin' de dust uv de golden road, en er-moppin' his old bald head wid er red bandanna handkerchief, an' er-lookin' es pi'ius in death es he wus sancterfied in life. Now boss, you kno' de Kunnel wus one uv des here prayin' lawyers—dat you

kin always safely brand es de Devil's Own—an' he died jes' 'fo' I did, an' he wus awful smart an' awful slick, an' whilst I didn't have much idee he knowed eny mo' 'bout de road to heab'n dan I did, I wus bankin' on his 'biiity to find it out fust. Marse John, lemme tell you sump'in to paste allers in yo' hat: never trust er prayin' lawyer or er tradin preacher—never.

" 'Hello, Wash,' sezee, 'which way yo gwine?'

"Sez I: 'Kunnel I's cogertatin' on which uv dese heah roads leads to heab'n.

" 'Oh', sez he, 'I kin show you which road ter take. I dun bin up dar an' file my brief wid Jedge Peter at de gate, but dar wus some leetle irregularerties in de pleadin's, an' I's come back to answer his demur.'

"Den he laugh an' say: 'Wash, de ole feller don't kno' a little bit uv law, an' hit's de easiest thing in de wurl' to wuck him ef you only do es I say. Now, when I went up and presented him my church papers, an' tole him who I wus, deac'n an' all dat, he 'lowed he nurver had l'arned to read English an' he throwed my papers over er bluff, whar I seed some smoke risin' an' swellin' sorter like de smoke uv er passin' freight engine, an' den he look at me an' ax ef I wus ridin' or walkin'? Sez I, 'Sir, I am walkin'.' 'Dat settles it,' sez he, "nobody erfoot will ever git in dis gait, an' es fur dat artomobeel crowd,' sez he, 'dey go on to hell widout stoppin', fur dey carry de scent of hell erlong wid 'em, enyhow. 'No, sah, Kunnel,' sez he, 'you gotter ride er hoss to git into heah. We need 'em to pull de cherriots in heab'n' '—an' de 'Kunnel look wise an' stroke his chin whiskers.

" 'Now, Wash,' he went on, soft-lak, 'I's got er plan, my color'd frien', dat'll fix ole Peter an' let us bofe in. I kno' de road—I's bin dar befo', so you be de hoss an' I'll be de rider, an' Peter will throw open de gate, an' let us bofe in. Dey's nuffin' lak er leetle brains, Wash—er leetle brains in dis wurl' an' de nex'.'

"Wal, boss, dat all look mighty conniv'rous ter me, an' es I had been all my life er-totin' de burdens uv de white man, it 'peered mighty nachul to keep it up. So I got down on my all-fo's, de Kunnel he mounted me, an' I started up de pike in er jog trot. But I hadn't gone fur befo' de ole Kunnel punch me in de side wid his heels, yanked my mouf nearly off wid de gallus bridle an' de shoestring bit he fixed up fur me befo' he started, an' yelled out:

" 'Change dat gait, you ole fool; do you think I would ride into heab'n on er trottin' hoss when I c'u'd ride er easy pacer?'

"I seed de p'int, an' shifted.

" 'Ah, dat's better,' sez he, 'an' mo' restful.'

" 'At de gate Marse Peter stop us, an' say: 'Am you ridin' or walkin', sah?'

" 'Ridin' dis time, yo' Honoh,' say de Kunnel.

" 'Good,' sez Peter, er-glancin' at me, 'but I don't lak de looks uv dat sway-backs scrub you're ridin', so I'll jes' let you hitch 'im to de fence, but you kin walk in!'

"An' de ole Kunnel, he hitch me to de fence sho' 'nuff, an' walked in widout battin' his eye or sayin' much obleged, an' dar I wus champin' er shoestring bit, tied to de fence uv heab'n, wid er gallus line, an'

dodgin' er hoss-fly es big es er turkey gobbler dat wus buzzin' aroun' over de bluff nigh by.

"Peter look at me er long time, sorter smilin' an' sorter mad, an' den he sez: 'Thort you'd fool me, did you? Wal, for dis decepshun, I'll turn you into er sho' 'nuff hoss,' and befo' I c'u'd say scat, boss, I wus er black Hal pacer, wid two white feet, a star, snip, black mane and tail, so help me Gord, an' dat 'ar hoss-fly es big es er turkey was buzzin' aroun' tryin' to bore er hole in me.

"Gimme ernurver dram, Marse John."

I thought he was entitled to it.

"But dat wa'n't all. F'um dat day on dey didn't do nuffin' but use me on dat road, carryin' folks up to de gate, but nurver gittin' in myse'f. An' dey wucked me 'twell I almos' drapped dead ag'in. An' I carried Jews an' Turks an' Chinese, an' ever' kind uv man dat ever lived, 'twell de golden pike wus er pile uv brass, an' de sun was er furnace uv fiah, an' me de hoss er-doin' all de totin.'

"An' ever day ole Peter 'u'd lead me to de bluff an' let me look over on de pit down below. An' dar I seed folks I nurver dreamed 'u'd be dar, in dis wurl', an' I failed ter see udders dat I thort 'u'd be dar on de hottes' gridiron. Dar wus heathens er-wonderin' what it all meant, an' Christians still 'sputin' on baptism an sancterfercashun, an' ever'one uv 'em, boss, er-holdin' er fat Afercan heathen 'twixt him an' de fiah. Greeks, Turks, niggers, Jews, Spanyards—all dar, boss. Dar wus doctors, still er-lyin' an' lookin' wise, an' when de yudders called fur water de devil had 'em to dose 'em

wid quinine an' calermel, or cut open de reel bad men huntin' fur de 'pendix. Lawyers? Boss, ef hell only had er bookcase an' er dirty carpet, cuspedores an' er sweatin' lot uv bad-smellin' jurors, you'd er-thort it wus some ord'nary co'tehouse wid er fiah attachment. In one corner dey had penned off er lot uv ole wimmens, all talkin' an' argyin' at onct, an' I ax Peter whut dey wus, an' he sed dey wus de muthers uv de wives uv men, an' dey had to be penned off dar ter keep 'em frum runnin' de place an' bossin' it deyselves.

"Dey wus all dar, boss—all but de babies, as I wus tellin' you. Nurver did I heah de wail uv er little one come up fum de pit, nur de lisp uv er lullerby turned into moan. Fur de sweetes' Nurse dat ever er baby had, had sed, whilst He was on earth, 'De little chillun I'll take keer uv dem'—an' dey had all gone to Him.

"Day arter day I seed dis; day arter day I carried nations on my back from de partin' uv de two ways to de gate whar Peter stood, 'twell I prayed to die ag'in.

"An' one day, when I thort I c'u'dn't stan' it no longer, dar come along er smilin', quiet man, wid er kind look in his eyes. An' dey tole him to mount me an' ride up to de hill. But he looked me all over, my puffed legs an' sore feet an' sweat-caked sides an' drawn flank, an' he said; 'No—no—I wouldn't ride into heab'n on the miz'ry uv er dumb beast.'

"An' he fotch me some water to squench my thirst, an' he tuck off de saddle an' bathe my back, an' he led me slowly up de hill. An' when we come to de gate, Peter looked at 'im pow'ful 'stonished, an' sed:

" 'Who am you, sah, dat w'u'd choose ter walk ter heab'n when you mout ride?'

"An' den de man look at 'im quiet-lak, an' say, 'I am nuffin' heah, my Lord, an' it matters not what my name is. Call me one dat had no creed, an' harmed no man, an' luved all things, Lord, yea, even de beasts uv de fiel's an' de birds uv de air an' de wurm dat creepeth. An' so lovin' dem, I would not ride even to heab'n's gate on de miz'ry uv eny beast that Gord has made.'

"And den dar cum er burst uv music de lak uv which no man ever heurd befo', an' a buterful gate on a river I nurver seed befo' was flung wide open, an' er voice sed: 'Righteousness an' truth have met toguther. Whatsoever you did unto one uv dese you do it also unto me.'

"An' Peter waved his han' an' de man was clothed in white an' light, an' went in de glory gate—de onlies' one uv dem all dat went in, an' I seed dat yudder gate dat ole Kunnel Ketchum an' all went in wusn't heab'n at all, but just a side entrance to hell—an' es he went in he waves his han' at me an' sed; 'Go back ag'in to earth an' learn to luve all things dat Gord has made, an' yo' nabur as yo'se'f', an' befo' I knowed it I stood in my grave clothes in de woods uv Bigby, lookin' fust at de grave at my feet an' den at de skies above me, an' wonderin' what had happen sense I died."

The queer turn the old man gave to his story set me to thinking, and the hidden lesson touched me so

greatly I could not reply. To throw off its wierdness, I finally said:

"Well, what had become of the widow?"

"I tole you I wus dead nigh six weeks. My wife, she'd marri'd ag'in, thank God, whilst I wus dead!"

HOW UNCLE WASH CAPTURED A BUCK

UNCLE WASH was brought up in the days when game was plentiful and he early imbibed the love of the chase, following old "Marster" and the hounds. Even in old age these instincts cling to him, and at the first *konk* of the Christmas wild goose, or the whistle of the blue teal, he is ready to follow me on the river or in the field. On the river he is a pretty good paddler, but keeps in the bottom of the boat a percussion-cap musket—of the the G. D. cap persuasion—that shoots anywhere from four drams to a handful of powder, and has been known to kill blue teal so far up the river (and that, too, after my Parker had done its best) that I have sat in the boat in chagrin and amazement. He has often told me he has killed ducks so far off they were dead before they heard the report of the gun! I have had some great hunts with the old man, but of late he is getting old and I have not encouraged him to take risk on the river. I am not sorry; for as he grows older, the spirit of his African pot-hunting ancestry is ever uppermost in his nature, and in spite of all I say, he does not hesitate "for his stomach's sake," as he terms it, to fire into a covey of roosting quail or build a dead-fall for the unsuspecting rabbit.

Therefore I am not sorry to relate his latest misfortune.

I had missed him for several weeks but the other darkies had told me he was on his annual foot-washing

tour in the barrens of Hickman County. Here, out in the woods, is a church of the faithful—old Hardshell Baptists—in which Uncle Wash, besides being Chief Priest, is also the "High Exalted Steward of the Towel," and attends to the job of seeing that the feet of the "bredderin' and sisterin'" are properly dried after ablution.

I was not surpr sed, therefore, to find him not only in bed but swathed in bandages dipped in "dat new kind uv medicine dat makes you a new skin, an' Gord knows I need it," he groaned.

"No, no, Marse John, de meetin' wus all right. Dis wuzn't no fight, no 'lection fur deacon dat wusted me. No, no; niggers cum forty miles to git ole-fashion religin' an' dey feet washed. I's allers sed our'ns de only korrect creed in de wurl', kase it makes de members wash dey feet at least onct er year an dat am mo' dan is in de Confession uv Faith uv sum uv de yudders.

"Yas, sah, I went down dar in de barrens whar I use ter hunt deer wid ole Marster, an' I puts up wid Sis' Tilly at Goose Neck Holler. She is de main prop uv de church dar, an' she raises de bes' bran' uv yaller laigs in dem parts. About de thu'd mawnin', in de cool an' crisp uv dem hills de huntin' fever struck me. Dar cum er little haze on de hills at night, sorter misty and sorter still, dat set me to thinkin' uv de ole hunts I use ter have wid ole Marster down dar. Ever' day, gwine to meetin', I'd see squir'ls in de trees an' patter-ges runnin' 'cross de road, an' I knowed dat wa'n't all, dat dem barrens wus jes filled wid deer. To make it

wuss, Sis' Tilly told me 'bout er pow'ful fine buck she'd seed time an' erg'in cum right up to de cornfield in de clearin'; an' dat day when I called up de mo'ners at church my body wus dar but my sperit wus on de deer stand down on Swan Creek. I cudn't sleep at night fur thinkin' uv dat buck an' I cudn't pray in meetin' widout usin' sech expressions es de hart dat panteth fur de water brooks.

"I had de huntin' fever bad. And like ever'body frum Jonah to Jehosefat dat deserted de Lawd's cause fur de flesh pots uv Egpyt, I got it in de neck—or ruther de back," he said, mournfully as he tried to turn over in bed.

"You can fiddle to de Lawd but you can't fool Him, Marse John.

"One mawnin' jes' es day wus breakin' I riz up, es wus my custom, an' went out in de thicket uv er near-by hill fur my mawnin' devoshuns. I allers do dis befo' breakfus' on er empty stomach kase dar is nothin' lak er empty stomach to keep er man spir'chul an' nuthin' like er full 'un to keep 'im devilish. I's allers sed that hell wus er place whar dey make er man eat breakfus' food all day long and drink sody water at night.

"Wal, sah, up de hill I crep' fur de bushes. I allers prayed behin' er ole log way up de hill side an' daylight cotched me er-kneelin' down by dat log ready to put up sump'n worth while to de throne uv grace, dressed in my preachin' clo's.

"But jes' es I crep' up an' knelt, I heerd sump'n sorter sigh, like a tired gal in her sleep, jes over de

yudder side uv de log, an' my heart stood still fur er minit. I peeped over de log an' I mighty nigh drapt dead sho' 'nuff, fur dar wus er pair uv fine horns wid five prongs stickin' over de top uv de log an' dey wus hooked on to de head end uv de bigges' buck in Hickman County. Sum hunter an' hounds had gin him er turrible chase de day befo' fur he cerried mud on his belly an' sides, an' es I peeped over wid my heart in my throat, I seed him wiggle his year so happy lak an' sigh agin, one uv dem long, happy-gal sighs, layin' up dar so safe on de sunny side uv dat log in de woods.

"Es I peeped I sed to myse'f, 'Lawd, de righ'chus am nurver forsaken, nur do his chillun have to beg fur venison steak. Prayer will keep, O Lawd, bein' only wind an' repentunce an' needin' neither pepper nur salt; but dat buck won't, an' is liabul eny minnit to start fur parts unknown.' "

The old man looked out of the window and groaned. It was some time before he spoke again. At last earnestly: "Ain't it strange dat 'sperement an' 'sper'ence am de only teachers fur er nach'ul bawn fool? An' dars whar I tumbled into de net uv de Philistines sot by de han' uv de devil hisse'f. Marse John," whispering it earnestly, "dat wan't no buck—hit wus de devil—hit wus de ole man hisse'f, dat had 'sumed de form bes' calculated to rope me in. You know he c'n take eny form he wants to, 'cordin' to de gen'l'm'n he's arter. Sometimes he's er race hoss, sometimes he's er soldier, sometimes he's er 'oman, sometimes, fur er cheap nigger, he's er fat shote er er yaller laig chicken. But dat mawnin' he sized me up oncommon-

ly handy an' make me backslide in de only form dat cu'd er got me—*er venison steak fur er empty stomach!*

"Wal, wal, de profits fell befo' me on less'n dat. Dat buck wus sho' mo' temptin' dan Esau's mess uv pot-licker an' b'iled greens an' looked gooder to me dan Jonah's whale er Samson's Jew-gal.

"I cooned it on all fours back to de cabin. Sis' Tilly wus up gittin' breakfus'.

" 'Sis' Tilly!' sez I, 'gimme dat plow line up dar on de peg, quick!'

" 'Whut's de matter?' sez she, 'I thought you wus up in de bushes er-wrastlin' wid de angel in prayer.'

" 'De Lawd dun told me to wrastle wid sump'in' else,' sez I, 'so gimme dat plow line quick ef you want enuff meat to last all winter.'

"An' I lit out. But bein' er 'oman she nachully guessed jes whut it wusn't, an' I heerd her call out at me:

" 'Brer Washin'tun, don't you ketch dat hawg dis time ef he ain't got a crop on one year an' a swaller-fork in de yudder. You mout git into trouble.'

"Some fool folks nurver furgits er man's mischeevious habits uv his youth.

"Up de hill I crep' on cat-toes, but still dat fool 'oman kep' on er-talkin'—her voice up dat holler sound like er kalliope an' I wus sho' sh'd wake dat buck."

" 'Don't ketch dat hawg, Brer Washin'tun, I tell you, tell de sun goes down. Lawd,' ef he ain't crazy!'

"As I crep' along I made two good slip nooses in dat rope. One I slips over my head an' 'roun my middle, and de yudder—wal, jes wait."

He was sitting up in bed, his eyes gleaming and I, with mouth open, was hastening him on. A sigh: "Jes' wait, I say, Marse John—I thought I wus er-ketchin' er buck, but I caught de devil.

"Up, up, I crawls—no cat wus ever mo' slyer. My heart kep' goin' *thumpety—thump* and choke me so I hatter stop an' breathe through my mouth. Up—up I slips, crawlin' right on my stomach, right up behin' de log. I raised my head er little, an' thank Gawd, dar riz dem horns jes 'bove de log lak de fingers uv Faith er-pintin' to de better lan'. Thank Gord, he wus still er-dreamin' uv his lady-luv an' er-sighin' to de spirit uv de mornin' stars. He wus sleepin' es sound es er houn' puppy on de door mat in de sun, arter er breakfas' uv raw beef liver, pot-licker an' bread, an' er-snoozin' lak er half grown boy at midnight arter er hard day's plowin' in new groun'. I slip my han' over gently—slowly, my heart beatin' lak er kittle drum an' makin sich er noise, I felt sho' he heerd it, an' den, wid er little thrust, I dropped de noose over dem five prongs—down—down! I seed it settle over his head. I gin er lightin' jerk, jumped up, bracin bofe foots agin' de log an' as I heerd dat de secret uv tamin' wild animuls wus bein' kind an' 'swazive, jes' to see how it 'ud take I whispered sorter smilin' an sorter 'swazive in his year:

" *'Cum, buck, you is my pet!'*

"Gord, Boss, it tuck. He riz an' I riz. But I had sich a foot-holt an' sich er toe-holt an' leg-holt I felt dat whut Gord had j'ined together no man cu'd put asunder, an' it made me so happy I commence singin' dat good ole song:

" '*A c-h-a-r-g-e to keep I h-a-v-e!*'

"My Gord, Marse John, how often er man gits er dead cinch on er thing he'd lak to turn er-loose! In jes' two secon's I seed dar wus mo' fittin' applecashun in dat ole song dan I had ever dreamed uv. I nurver knowed befo' er buck cu'd jump from er nap into de nex' wurl an' take me along wid 'im. I seed sump'in' go up in de air, twixt me an' de sun, twenty feet high an' headed fur de bottom uv dat steep hill. I felt dat plow line sink out uv sight, three inches deep in my stomach, par'lizin' me in de l'ines wid er grip dat sent er pain clur th'oo my kidneys, an' leavin' me limp es er widder's handkerchief at de grave of her thu'd husban', an' do' I thought I had foot holt enuff to stop er steam injine my legs give away, an' somehow it jes' seem to me entirely ergreeable to go 'long wid dat ar buck. An' yit not 'zactly wid 'im, but allers 'bout er plow line length behin' 'im, but givin' 'im er close race fur de bottom uv de hill! When he'd be up twenty feet in de air I'd be on de groun', an' when he'd be twenty feet down de hill I'd be takin' er little fresh air up 'mong de lim's uv de trees. I nurver knowed befo' er nigger cu'd go so high an' ever cum back to earth agin, an' ever' jump he made I lost sum uv my linen on de lim's uv de trees an' you cu'd trail me throo' de trees de nex' day whar my wool an' tattered gyarments wus hung up fur birds' nestis. Dar wus only one diff'unce twixt dat buck's race an' mine fur de bottom uv dat hill; I went jes' es high an' jes' es fur ever jump he made, but he landed right side up on his fo' feet on er good spot whilst I landed on eny ole part uv me dat happen

to be nex' to de yearth at de time uv landin' an' on any ole thing from er stump to er flint bed. It look lak I hated fur 'im to beat me an' when I cu'dn't go fast enuff th'oo' de air I'd break my gait an' roll an' tumble down.

"Down de hill we cum, crashin' th'oo' de thickets; some times I'd be erhead uv buck an' sometimes buck 'ud be erhead uv me. Es we cum down on de cabin under de hill, buck, lak de joyous creature he wus, thought it bes' to go over de top uv de house an' es it seem lak I done made up my mind nurver to let 'im git fur erhead uv me, I followed, scapin' off shingles an' knockin' down de chimbley. I heerd Sis' Tilly run to de do' an' look up 'mazed an' delighted:

" 'Glory, hally-luyah, Br'er Washin'tun is er-playin' Sandy Claws erg'in an' er'breakin' in er reindeer.'

" 'Cut de rope,' sez I, 'cut de rope—fetch de ax, quick!'

"Dat make her nearly die laffin'; 'ha-ha-*ha*-nigger, 'spile all dis fun an' my plow line, too? No, sah!' she 'spon'. 'Br'er Washin'tun—you sho' have got 'im.'

" 'Bout dat time I hit de gravel ag'in an' we started fur Swan Creek er hund'ed yards erway. But de nex' bump I hit my head erg'in er stump an' it sorter brighten' me up er little. I felt I wuz er-dyin' an' er-gwine to my death—an' den I seed jes' whut it all meant, dat I had bin sent by de Lawd on de hill-top to pray, but lak His chillun uv ole I'd raced arter de flesh pots uv Egypt. Lak Jonah, I wus doin' jes' de thing He'd tole me to let erlone.

"I wus gwine down dat hill *clipperty-clip-bang*, but

er man sees de pint mighty quick in er tight place an' I started in to put up dat prayer I'd neglected, fur I seed it wa'nt gwineter keep no longer an' dat I had failed in my blindness to 'terpret de meanin' uv de whole thing an' stid uv dat buck layin' so peaceful gin dat log bein' intended fur er burnt sacrifice fur my stomach, he wus jes' de ole devil hisse'f dar to entice me from de true path.

"I lak ter died sho' nuff when dis dawned on me an' dat I hilt de devil hisse'f an' nuthin' but er plow line 'twixt him an' me. But thank Gawd, by dis time he wus sorter winded an' now an' den he'd holler out *bah-bah*, sorter mad lak ef I failed to cum fas' nuff, an' es I went er-rollin' an' er-tumblin' down dat hill heah is de prayer Sis' Tilly say she heerd, es she cum to her senses at last an' tuck in de fix I wus in:

" 'O, Lawd (*bah! bumpety-bump!*) furgive an' have mercy! (*bah-bah! bumperty-bump*). Cut dis rope, Oh Lawd, an' I'll cut fur de prayer meetin' (*bah! whiz-zip!*). I'll pray all day, O Lawd (*bah whiz-th-u-mp! dam! dat's er stump!*) 'Scuse me, O Lawd! Cut dis line fur I's tied to de devil an' racin' to (*whack-bah dat's er flint pile!*). Cut it an' I'll nurver go back on you erg'in so he'p me Gord! (*Bumpty-bump cr-a-sh*). Tarnashun! we've butted down Sis' Tilly's bee gum an' de pesky things hes kivered me an' buck, too, but thank Gord he's headed lak P'inter fer deep water. Head us, O Lawd, cut dis line an' I'll go back to preachin' an' dis ole buck c'n go to—

"De bees had sot dat buck er-fiah es well es me an' when he put off to de deep hole at de crick not fifty foot

erway, now pullin' me 'long lak er sled, I tole 'im he cu'dn't git into water too quick fur me.

"*Ker-chunk-bah*, he hit de water. 'O Lawd,' sez I, (*blub-bl-u-b bl-u-b*) an' my head went under but it wus better'n bees.

"I heerd Sis' Tilly er-screamin' on de bank an' er-wavin' er ax es I went down. Jes' lak er fool 'oman, allers too late.

"Up we cum an' I seed him hit de yudder bank an' er-doin' my best to beat him to it. My head cum up at last an' I wus mad es er hornet. I braced myself agin de bank an' to my joy I seed I'd stopped him. Den I wus sorry—fur back he turn', stood on his hin' legs, sed *bah*! *bah*! an' butted me back into dat crick, knockin' me senseless. Gawd, chile I tell you he wus de devil!

"But still I felt lak I wanted to go wid him, dat we wus united till death us do part, an' I feel myse'f *bumperty-bumperty* over de groun' an' up de bank. Den jes' es I give up an' shet my eyes I thought dat Pisgah had fell on me an' I seed dat buck fling up his head an' fall back sprawlin'. It wus Sis' Tilly an' her half ton uv sainted Christyun Faith. She sot on my chist to hold me down. I seed de buck snort and try to rise but he wus anchored on de beach lak de whale dat swaller's Jonah. I heerd her say, '*cum, reindeer, you kerryin' dis fun too fur*', an' down cum her ax an' I went to sleep.

"But you had some fine venison the next day," I said consolingly.

The old man groaned: "Didn' I tell you dat wa'nt

no deer? No, sah, I wouldn' te'ch it—I give 'im to er nigger and he said he cooked er roast two days an' it give out little blue flames. He tried to eat er piece an' de more he chawed it the bigger it got an' so he throwed the whole thing in the crick an' it made the water siz for er mile an' er ha'f. T'wus de devil, I tell you, but you cain't teach white fo'ks nuthin'. Who but de devil cu'd fix me lak dat? I started frum de top uv dat hill dressed in my Prince Albert preachin' coat, my broadcloth pants, er cellarlord collar, er good pair uv shoes an' er whole skin, an' when I cum to I didn't have on nuthin' but my shoes. O, gimme er drink, Marse John, and go on home! You cain't 'splain nuthin' to white fo'ks. 'Sides dat de ole man wants to go to sleep!"

THE BALKING MULE

I was reading to Uncle Wash the other night, a very interesting book—"Wild Animals I Have Owned." The old man listened and said that it was mostly lies. "Now I can't write er book on Wil' *Animules* I have owned, but gwine back er long life an' thinkin' uv all its correspondences, both comin' an' gwine, I cu'd write er good size vollyum on *Wild Animules Dat Have Owned Me!* An' de fust pair uv dese dat I rickollect wus my fust mother-in-law an' er balkin' mule named Tommy Pete. I menshuns 'em togedder beca'se I got possessed uv bofe uv 'em de same year, one by matrimony an' de other by get-your-money, fur de man dat put off Tommy Pete on me sho' got-my-money—'en fur nothin'.

"Dis pair didn't fit nothin' else in de wurl but each other an' dar dey wus dead matches. Dey bofe balked on de rest uv de wurl but dey nurver balked on each yudder. Tommy Pete wouldn't pull fer me er plow line tied to his collar, but he wus allers ready to take my mother-in-law to de meetin' whar he'd spen' de day in de shade uv er ellum switchin' flies offen de face uv annurr mule whilst de yudder mule turn'd de favor in kind.

"An' my mother-in-law wus jes' es satisfied inside singin' all day 'bout Zion, de happy lan' an' de stream dat flowed thru heab'n, while Dinah, my wife, spent her time washin' fur de fambly by de stream dat flowed

thru de back yard, an' I spent mine ho'in' cohn when I orter been plowin' it.

"Tommy Pete wus bohn balkin'—so de man tole me *arter* I traded. He sed Tommy Pete nurver did want to be bohn.

"De fus' time he balked on me wus on er 'possum hunt an' jes' when I had de bigges' 'possum up de leetles' tree. Befo' I cu'd get him to ondustan by all kinds uv moral swashun (de last argyment bein' a cedar rail wid er knot in it) dat 'possum meat wus good fur man to eat, de 'possum got erway.

"Frum dat time on he went into er steady decline—chiefly declinin' to wurk. I allers thought he caught de disease frum my mother-in-law, fur lak her, he wan' pertickler whut he declined ef he got it into his head dat I wanted it de yudder way. Ef I wanted to go to de fiel,' he wanted to go to de village sto' whar loafin' niggers wus. Ef I wanted to ride him home, he wanted me to walk. Ef I wanted him to go to water, he wanted to waller, an' ef I wanted to wuck him, law, *wal, he jes wanted ter see me do it!*

"Wal, sah, I tried ever'thing on him. One Sunday he balked at church arter meetin' wus out an' I had Dinah in de wagon an' de preacher wus gwine to go home wid us an' eat our yaller laig.

"Wal, he saved us de yaller laig by dat balk. Fur arter I'd lambasted him wid ever'thing I cu'd lay my han's on, frum er hick'ry stick to de hitchin' pos' in de front uv de church, an' had used up all my own language an' ha'f uv de devil's, de preacher he say very solemnly, '*Be keerful uv your remarks in de presence uv*

dervinity, Br'er Washin'ton, an' let me try moral swashun on him—hit's de greates' force in de universe.'

"All right," says I, "Parson, but I'll jes tell you to stan' in his front ter swade him fur he's 'tickler sot agin moral swashun an' when it comes ter kickin' he can kick es fur in front as behin'.

" 'O dat ain't it,' sed de parson, 'I's gwine whisper er few consolin' words in his year, de p'int bein' to distract his attenshun frum hisse'f. You don't ondustran' er balkin' mule, Br'er Washin'ton—hit's all de result uv nervous se'f conshusness an' de t'ing is to get dey thorts offen deyse'f. Now jes watch me,' an' he 'proached Tommy Pete wid er glad, happy smile, tuck holt uv his year an' 'gun to whisper somethin' to him.

"I don't know whut he whispered to him, Marse John, but it muster bin de mos' tarnel insult dat er man ever offered to er mule, an' 'fore I cu'd tell him to be keerful, an' dat Tommy Pete wus orful 'tickler 'bout who whispered in his years, Tommy Pete tole him. Fur sudden-lak he flung his head sideways, butted de parson back'ards an' den kicked him clear over de wagon into er huckerberry bush.

"Wal, sah, we poured water on de parson's head fur two days an' he laked nurver to cum to. He didn't kno' nuffin. When I thort he wus sorter cumin' 'round, I sed:

"*Parson, what in de worl' did you say to make him so mad?*

"But all he cu'd do wus to moan in his sleep lak he wus preachin' er sermon an' mumblin', '*An 'Moses*

struck de rock in de wilderness an' de watah gushed forth!'

"An' when he cum to he nurver cu'd 'member whut he sed dat made Tommy Pete so mad.

"But dar wus no preachin' in Zion fur two months, thank Gord!

" 'Wal, sah, dat insultin' remark uv de preacher jes seem to fix 'im in his ways, an' he looked lak he wanted to take it all out on me. But when my mother-in-law died, he played it lowdown on me, to beat de ban'. I 'p'inted him chief mourner, 'kase dey nurver had been separated in life an' I wanted 'em togedder in death—an' selected him es chief pall-bearer fur to carry his ole frien' to de grave. Dis I thought he'd do wid dat same pleasure I'd er done myse'f, fur she wus er good 'oman in spite uv her ways. We gin de ole lady er fine sen'-off. We hed er succession er mile long, includin' two surreys, er rockaway an' er hayrake—six niggers bein' perched on one hayrake. Tommy Pete hauled her in de spring wagon two miles erfore it got into his head dat burryin' de ole lady wus jes whut I wanted him to do, an' den he balked an' we had to tote her five miles whilst Tommy Pete stood by de roadside an' wept.

"Law, he wus dat onnery!

"Wal, sah, I 'civored him at las', leastwise Marse Jim did. I driv' 'im to town one day, an' Dinah bein' busy wid de week's washin', I took Sis Tilly 'long to see ole John Roberson's sho'.

"I calklated Tommy Pete wanted to see de animules hisse'f (I allers had to calklate on whether it suited

Tommy Pete or not), an' dat he'd enjoy de cirkis 'bout es well es we did. En he did. I hitched him nigh an' he nearly laffed his fool se'f to death at de trick mule an' I even seed 'im rubbin' noses wid de elerfunt es much es to say, *'Wal, ole feller, ef I had yo' bulk I'd be er balker sho' 'nuff!'*

"It wus late when de sho' turned out an' I thought sho' Tommy Pete'ud go home in er hurry to keep warm, after havin' sech er happy day; but he got it into his head dat de sho' wus got up jes fur his spechul benerfit an' dat he orter watch de elerfunt an' de trick mule fur ever, an' he balked wid us jes in front uv de drug store, blockin' de main street uv de town.

"It wus de wuss place in de wurl fur him to sta'n fur dar wus er big crowd an' hit's one uv de leetle hapits uv humanity fur ev'body to get erroun' er balkin' hoss or mule an' tell de po' hacked devil in de wagon whut he already knows—*dat hit's er onnery cuss he's got dar, an' why don't you make him go on?*

Now er balkin' mule is es ole es ole Joseph Potifur (an' I uster heah ole Marster laff an' say dat Joseph wus de fus' balkin' mule uv which hist'ry has eny recud), an' though dar ain't nurver been nothin' knowed to break 'em uv de habit, still dar am fools yet who b'leeves it kin be done.

"Dey wus soon erroun' me tellin' me how. Long sperience wid Tommy Pete had tort me pashens, which is de only Christian virtue er balkin' mule will bring in de sheaves to you, an' knowin' frum long sperience dat dese fools must each have his say, me an' Sis Tilly jes folded our han's an' waited until Tommy Pete finished wid 'em.

"An' dey wus all soon dar.

"De fus' man tuck er piece uv scrap iron an' pecked on Tommy Pete's fo' foot.

"Den Tommy Pete pecked on his'n an' de doctor he sed afterwards he wus mighty proud because he didn't have ter take off but two uv de man's toes.

"An' me and Sis Tilly we jes sot still.

"De nex' man wus jes passin' by (dat's one uv de sho' signs uv er dinged fool, dat he can't pass by er balkin' hoss widout stoppin' to tell de driver how to make him go), an' of co'se he hed to stop an' try. He tuck 'casion to tell all de crowd dat he were frum Bosting an' dat he b'longed to de Society Fur De Prevenshun of Hurtin' De Feelin's uv Things—'an' I's gwin'ter sho' you good people right now,' sez he, 'how fur kindness will go on er dumb animule.' He patted Tommy Pete 'fecshunately on de nose, an' tuck him by de bit an' sed: 'Now, my good fellow, don't be sore on yo' job—but jes move out an' do yo' duty—now, do!' But me an' Sis Tilly we sot still, an' when he cum to arter grovelin' roun' on de groun' an' foamin' at de mouf an' sayin' over an' over ag'in, 'Liberty an' union, now an' forever,' he wus er whole site sorer on his job den Tommy Pete wus on his'n.

"An' me and Sis Tilly we sot still.

"I tried to stop de man dat b'ilt de fiah under Tommy Pete, fur I knowed whut ud happen an' it ud jes fetch on mo' wuck fer me. But I acted as quick as I cu'd an' by totin' de wagon aroun' sideways an' strainin' my shoulder, I saved it.

"Dis made me b'ilin' mad an' when er fool nigger

cum up it jes dawned on him whut wus up an' he say, sorter laughin'.

" 'Why, Uncle Wash, dat ole mule won't *draw* will he?'

" 'Yes,' sez I, 'he sho' does—he *draws* ever' damn fool in ten miles of him!'

"Den I went in de drug sto' an' I asked Marse Jim ef he didn't have somethin' dat 'ud move dat mule.

"I seed Marse Jim reachin' fur de salts bottle, but when I 'splained to him dat I wanted him to move up de road, an' dat quick, fur it wus nigh to night an' pow'ful cold, he laughed an' sed '*sure*,' an' reached fur de Gypsy Juice. He cum out an' sed to me: '*Now be ready*,' an' he stuck er leetle syringe under Tommy Pete's hide an' 'jected it.

"I made er grab fur de lines but I wus too late. I seed Sis Tilly turn out back'ards es I heurd er rumble an' er snort an' up dat street went Tommy Pete, wagon an' all beatin' Star P'inter's time! I seed him go over de hill to'ards Hickman County an' I turned to Marse Jim an' I sed:

" 'Marse Jim, whut wus dat worth?'

" 'I don't charge you but a nickel, Wash,' he sed, laughin' 'fit to kill.

" '*Wal, Marse Jim*,' *sez I*, '*fur Gord's sake jes injec' ten cents' worth into me fur I's now got to ketch de infurnel ole fool!*'

"But I didn't. Nurver heurd of him ag'in, an' I's allers hoped he's gone to jine my mother-in-law."

HIS LITTLE PREACHER

THE other day I was whistling that coon song:

"All coons look alike to me."

Thé old man was poisoning potato bugs on our second crop of Irish potatoes. It was getting along "to'd's de shank uv de evenin'," as I had heard him so often express it, and I have noticed that about that time the old man is always hunting for some excuse to stop working. "Dar am jes two sho' nuff fools in dis wurl," I have heard him say, "one am de man dat wucks all de time an de yudder am de 'oman dat don't wuck at all."

I was not surprised, then, to see the old man set down his can of Paris green and water and give vent to a prolonged laugh. I have learned that the way to catch the old man is to get him when he is "fit and ready"—the same as a horse when he is expected to break the record—and I might carry it further and say you can't always tell when he is ready. But there are certain signs you can go by.

And so the old man has signs, too—that he is ready to go a heat in an old time yarn—and one is when the sun gets low and the bugs high—when a watermelon is waiting in the spring trough and the sheep on the hill begin to come out from the shaded woods for their evening meal in the meadow—now cooling with the condensing shadows of a setting sun.

The sign he gives is a furtive glance around and a big, chuckling laugh.

I had cut around the melon with my pocket-knife, and broken it open on a big rock, which left the jagged, juicy heart bulging out in a tempting lump. But I divided as equally as I could, under the circumstances, and as we sat in the shade of the elm by the big spring I shoved him his half and said:

"Now that's for what you were laughing at just now—out with it."

"I doan' blame white folks fur sayin' all coons look erlike, fur I tried it onct and I thou't I knowed my own kid—thou't ef it cum to de scratch I cu'd do lak er hoss an' tell 'im by his smell, enyway. But when I wus put to de test I foun' dey not only all look alike, but smell alike, too—an' dar's whar I cum mighty nigh gittin' into de wuss scrape I ever got into.

"Way back in slavery time, when er young p'ar uv niggers 'ud marry, de rule wus dey wus to live wid de gal's muther ontwel de fust chile was bohn. Ole marster useter la'f an' wink an' tell me it wus er trick uv de white folks to mek 'em hurry up wid de fus' chile! Jinerally we didn't need no hurryin' for ole Daddy Stork is mighty kind to young folks, 'spesh'ly niggers, which wus p'uffectly nat'ul, you know—rangin' all de way in his visertachuns frum er few weeks arter de suremony to es menny months—fur no nigger dat had eny manhood an' independence wanted to be pendin' on his wife's mammy eny longer den he cu'd he'p it! Den arter de chile wus bohn de marster 'ud give er log-

rollin' an' er house-buildin'—jinerally on er Sad'dy arter de crop wus laid by—an' all de niggers frum de 'joinin' farms 'ud cum over, fetch dey wives an' babies, an' whilst de men cut logs an' put up de cabin, de wimmen and gals 'ud quilt de young p'ar er quilt or two an' cook er big dinner uv gumbo soup and greens An' if de baby dat de young fo'ks had wus er boy de rule was dat Marster had to fling in er good big lam', es er kind uv er free gratis prize fur 'em gittin' er boy, an' den Lord, boss, de barbycue an' de stew we did have! In dem days eny man in Tennessee cu'd 'still de fruit uv his own orchard and not pay no rivernew, an' Marster had er nigger named Pete Gallerway dat cu'd beat de wurl' makin' apple-brandy. Every fawl he'd 'still Marster twenty gallons an' it 'ud stay in de cellar twell de naixt fawl, an' Lord, by dat time it wus dat kind uv stuff dat ef you drunk it in dis wurl' it seem ter kinder tel'fone to de angels in de naixt! It wus so ra'ar an' ripe you cu'd jes' put de stopper outen de bottle in yo' bootlegs an' cudn't keep from cuttin' de pigeon-wing to save yo' life an' er singin' dat song we sung den:

" 'Cum down ter Tennessee,
(Ride er ole gray hoss.)
Yaller gal's de gal fur me,
(Ride er ole gray hoss.)
Kiss her under de Mulberry tree,
(Ride er ole gray hoss.)
O my, nigger, don't you see,
Better cum ter Tennessee!'

"I tell you, boss, dey kin preach all dey please ergin good licker an' de famblys it busts up, but I's knowed menny er man to git er drink jes in time ter keep outen er divorcement. I don't see how sum men cu'd live wid de wives dey got ef dey cudn't tak er drink an' furgit dey miz'ry now an' den! Wal, in erbout three moons it wus my time to have er house-buildin' an' I wus mighty proud uv de job. Dinah wus kinder dissociated kase she'd sot her h'art on de fus' baby bein' yaller. Er 'oman, uv course, ain't got no reason fur eny thing—dey jes' goes by instinct, I reckin—an' de onlies' reason she had for spectin' an' wantin' er yaller baby wus dat she was allers mighty fond uv sorrel hosses an' she natur'ly hoped her fust child 'ud be er sorrel. It cum black, of course—jes' lak me, an' arter I opened his mouth an' seed he hed one tooth already cum an' ernudder comin' an' wus reddy fur eatin' de fus' day, I knowed he wus Br'er Washingtun up ter the thu'd an' fo'th jinerashun. But Dinah she tuck it mighty hard an' lowed she'd nurver git over he's not bein' er sorrel wid black p'ints!

"I say he wus black, but did yo ever see er right young nigger? A buzzard, you kno', is hatched white an' turns black, an' so er nigger is bohn red an' turns black, It's funny but it's so. A simon p'wore nigger when bohn is red wid er leetle bunch uv wooly h'ar on his head, an' five holes in his face, de two leetle ones in de center being' whar his nose gwineter be. Dey ain't no mistakin' his mouth, fur dat's de bigges' part uv his vizerbles, an' in jineral lang'widge you mout say it curls up on de north an' is bounded by hes h'ar, an'

curls down on de south an' is bounded by his belly-ban'. He's red, 'ceptin' de skin uv his head, which is sorter yaller, but on the thu'd day begin ter turn black jes' erbove de eyes, and in er few weeks he's all black 'ceptin' de bottom uv his hands an' feet, his wottles an' hock fethers, de tip uv his stomach an' de spot whar he sets on all day.

"Wal, arter de cabin wus put up an' de sun had set, de big stew wus sarved wid apple brandy an' den, Lord, de fun sho' started! Course I c'u'dn't be in it much—de dancin' an' juberlashun under de trees—case I wus de keeper uv de lam's, it bein' my house-raisin' an' my fus-bohn. Now de keeper uv de lam's is dis: de wimmin folks allers bring dey babies along ter de dance an' de house raisin' an' when de house is up an' de floor laid an' night cums an' de games begins, de babies is all suckled an' laid out, ever' one on his own sheepskin, on de flo' uv de new house fur ter go to sleep, an' de daddy uv de new-bohn kid is called de keeper uv de lam's an' must set dar an' watch 'em an' nuss 'em whilst de yudders eat an' play. It's hard, but it's de onwritten law, an' de objec' am to give de new daddy er lesson in pashents an' nussin' an' keerin' fur chilluns.

"Wal, dey wus forty on 'em, mighty nigh de same age, wid er fair sprinklin' uv sorrels an' browns, whilst sum look lak dey mouten be made outen new saddles an' jinger cakes. It went ergin me mightily to be pestered wid all er dem new colts wid dey projeckin' ways, but I had er big bottle uv apple brandy an' tuck er little consolashun frum it now an' den myse'f, an' ever time er kid 'ud wake up, I'd jes gin 'im er stiff

drink uv apple brandy an' stick de big toe uv de kid jes' above him in hes mouth ter suck on twell he dozed off. Dey wus three long rows on 'em. I'll sw'ar, boss, ef onct I didn't have 'em all konnected dat away lak links in er sauasge. Dat an' de brandy focht 'em ever' time an' I wus jes' chucklin' ter myse'f at whut er fine nuss I wus, an' dat I c'u'd soon be able to go out an' hug de gals, too, when dey all commence to have de jim-jams in dey sleep—seein' snakes an' things an' howlin' an' wigglin', an' frum de way some on 'em's eyes bulged out dey must er had elerfants an' rinocerasses arter 'em, too. Wal, suh, I broke fur de stable an' got er quart bottle uv stuff we gin de mules fur de colic—asserfedity an' h'artshorn, ladernum an' tu'pentine, all mixed—an' den I got de vinerger funnel to git it down, an' I drenched ever' one on 'em wid dat mule medercine, stuck ever' one's toe in de naixt one's mouth an' put 'em ter sleep ergin.

"Sum on 'em didn't wake up fur er week, but dat ain't de tale I' tellin' now.

"I tuck ernurr drink outen de bottle an' den I happen ter see one uv de lam's dat struck my eye. He wus de preacher's kid, whose daddy, er yaller feller, ole mistis had 'larned 'im to read an' write an' he tuck to preachin', and his lam' wus er bright sorrel wid flax mane an' tail, an' es he was erbout de size uv my little coon I thou't I'd play er joke on de wimmin folks, bein' es how Dinah wus sot on havin' er yaller kid. So I ups an' changes de clothes an' puts de yaller preacher's lam' on our sheepskin an' ourn on de yuther's pallet. Wal, sah, de mo' I thort uv it de funnier it seemed,

an' den I laffed twell I nearly wake 'em up again an' tuck ernurr drink an' went in ter swap 'em all off. I'd pick out two erbout de same size an' sex an' changed dey clothes an' bed, an' when I got through dere wa'nt nary one on' em dat u'd know hisse'f from de naixt one, an' es dey all smelt erlike I didn't see how dey mammies wus ever gwine ter git 'em straight ergin. Course I 'spected er lot uv fun when de games broke up an' tuck ernurr drink an' fix fur ter see it. But hit seems de niggers played on twell one o'clock an' forgot all erbout time ontwell one uv de patteroles—de mounted poleece dat kept niggers from prowlin' at night in dem days—rid up wid er hickory whip an' tole 'em it wus time fur to go to bed. Dis skeered 'em so dey all lit out an' ever' 'oman jes' bundled up her baby an' left, an' not one uv 'em knowed de difference. Es dey all lived from one ter ten miles erroun' on de farms, thinks I, dar'll be lots uv fun in de mawnin'! Dinah tuck ernurr look at hern befo' she went to sleep, an' den I heurd her whoop: 'Glory,' she said, 'my chile is done turned yaller —glory—glory!' She heard uv it bein' done onct befo' an' b'leeved it. Wal, I seed she had her h'art sot on it so bad I 'lowed I'd let it go at dat, 'specially es dey nurver had been er preacher in de family, but all er mine hed tuck to hoss racin' an' Dinah wus so happy over it she c'u'dn't sleep.

"I sed dar 'u'd be er time in de mawnin', but bless you' soul, honey, it started befo' day. Lights wus seen flashin' ever'where an' niggers wus runnin roun' wailin' an' weepin' an' wonderin'. De black uns had

yaller babies an' yaller 'uns had black 'uns, de upper crust had scrub babies an' de lettle black cohn fiel' scrubs wus in de highes' nigger socshul swim—wid de house gals an' maids an' qualerty niggers. Wuss en all, de chilluns jes' slept rat on an' didn't seem to keer whar dey wus an' who dey b'longed to. I tell you, boss, ef you ever gits bothered 'bout yo' chap not goin' to sleep, jes' gin 'im er good dose uv hoss medercine!

"It 'u'd been all right, an' jes' er joke ef dey hadn't stirred up ole Voodoo Jake, de witch doctor. He 'lowed de babies wus all right but dey had been voodooed an' de culler changed, an' he'd hafter rub 'em all wid de ile uv er black cat killed in de full moon on de grave uv er man dat had been hung fur murder, an' dey'd be all right. Er nigger jes' nachu'lly b'leeves all dis, 'specially all dem dat had de yaller babies an' not one on 'em 'ud gin 'em up.

"An' dat's hu' cum I got er yaller off-spring in my family ter-day, I am sorry ter say. But arter erwhile it got sorter mernoternous, an' I thort I'd lak ter git my own black baby back, an' I tole ole Marser whut I done, an' sum uv de niggers raised sech er stir dat de white folks hilt er meetin' an' did git sum on 'em back ag'in, but dey's jes' about ha'f uv 'em now in dat community dat don't kno' who dey daddies is. But dat's nachul, you kno'. But Dinah hed got stuck on de yaller baby, an' de preacher's wife on de black one, an' tho' I kicked erbout it I c'u'dn't do nuffin'. I tole ever'body how I dun it fur er joke, but dey all sed I wus sech er liar dey wouldn't b'leeve me. Ole Marser laff, an' say he hated to swap off er good black colt fur er

yaller one, but ef it suited de wimmin folks it suited him, an' so dar I wus.

"Wal, dey soon found I wus right, for when de boys growed up er leetle, an' big 'nuff fur dey pedergree to sho' up, whut you' reckin my black un dun 'fore he ten yeahs ole? De preacher tuck 'im ter camp meetin' an' he got up er mule race on de outside an' broke up his daddy's campmeetin' one day by ridin ole Marster's gray mule cl'ar over er bunch uv mourners an' spite uv punishment an' pra'ars arter dat, he tuck to ole Marster's stable an' dey ain't nurver got him out of it yit.

"An' dat yaller dorg I got, he warn't long showin' de mettle uv his pasture an' de proof uv his pedergree," and the old man sighed and looked troubled.

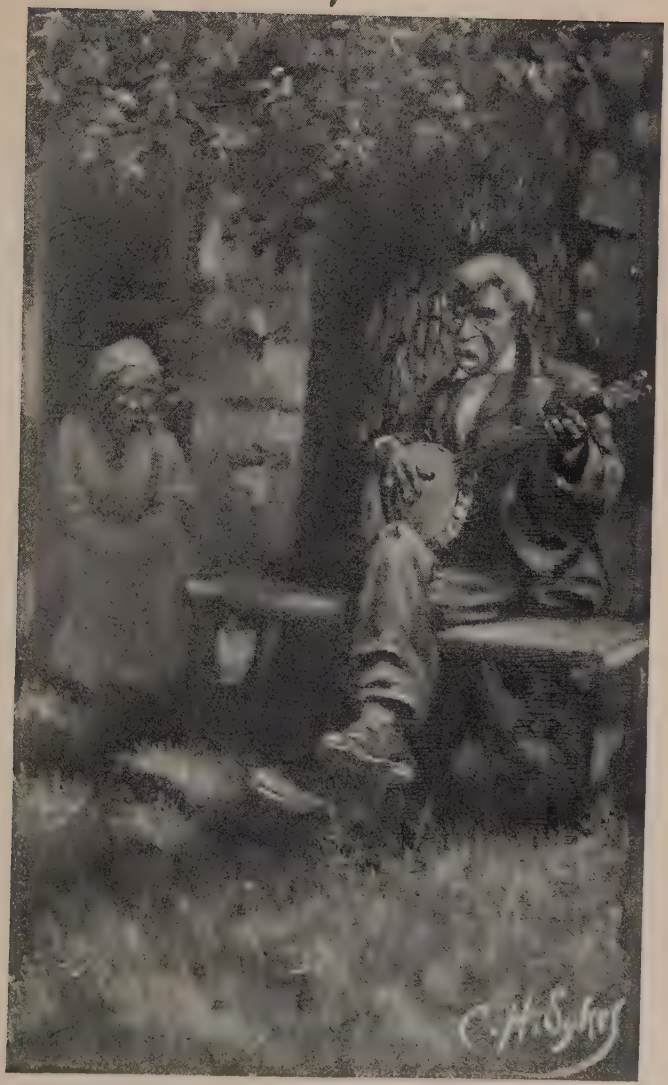
"How?" I asked.

"Marse John," he said sadly, "befo' he wus ten yeahs ole he stole ever' yaller legged chicken in de na'borhood."

MISS KITTY

O heah de banjo ringin',
O heah de tamboreen;
O heah de darkies singin',
Susanna, she's my queen.
O cum, my luve; O cum, my luve, wid me;
We'll dance an' sing down by de 'simmon tree.
O heah de banjo ringin',
O heah de tamboreen;
O heah de darkies singin',
Susanna, she's my queen.

A SONG in type is as unsatisfactory as one of Nature's pastels on pasteboard, and the simple negro melody above sounds nothing like the vibrating notes that floated, not long ago, into my window, fresh from the echoing strings of a banjo. I could not resist it, and on going out I found Uncle Wash under the elm that shaded his cabin door. The moonbeams glittered askance, flecking the earth with silvered blossoms and changing each flooded leaf into a night-blooming flower. The distant notes of a tree-frog came from the forest beyond, while the regular cadences of a whippoorwill added just the tinge of weirdness necessary to form the background of a banjo song. In darky language, the old man was "makin' the banjo hum," and for melody and sweetness, in the hands of a master, there is no instrument more weirdly musical.



THE OLD MAN WAS MAKING THE BANJO HUM.

To-night Old Wash was beside himself. The brass thimble on his "pickin' finger" flashed in the moonlight; his foot patted in unison, and fluttered like a black bat trying to leave the earth. Even his body kept time and swayed to and fro with the music. I listened in silent delight. The tune I had heard before, but not the words, for he was improvising as he played.

"De little stars am winkin',
Dey 'bout ter go ter sleep;
De pale moon now am sinkin',
An' daylight shadders creep.
O cum, my luve, we'll dance Ferginny reel;
De sun am up an' shinin'; now fur de cotton fiel'.
O heah de banjo ringin',
O heah de tamboreen;
O heah de darkies singin',
Susanna, she's my queen."

"Go on, old man," I said: "Give me that song again. You almost make me feel like going courting again. What's the matter with you? Thinking about starting all over in life?"

"No, sah; 'taint dat, sah," laughed the old man, " 'taint dat. Dey's too much moss on de old tree fur de leaves ter cum ergin. De sap can't rise when de bark am dead. De leaves fall off when de cotton boll open. Didn't you nurver think erbout it?" He added after a moment's thought, "De soul don't nurver gro' ole ef it's lived right. De head gits white an' de lim's weak an' de eyes dim, but de soul gits

younger es it grows older, de ole man gits mo' lak er boy es he goes down de hill. Nachur kinder seems to ease us off de stage uv life gently, lak she fotch us in. In our ole age we gits young ergin an' childish an' happy. We even try ter kick up our heels ergin an' be funny an' 'magine we gwinter live er long, long time yit. Sho' me de ole man—don't keer how ole he am—dat don't spec' ter live at least ten yeahs longer. Dat's Nachur's way uv foolin' us, sah; dat's her way uv puttin' her babies ter sleep—de las' long sleep. Puttin' 'em ter sleep contented lak, an' happy, thinkin' dey'll wake in de mornin' an' be younger ergin.

"I tell you, sah, ole Marster's mighty good ter us. He could er put us heah widout hope ef he'd er wanted to; he could er put us heah widout sweet dreams, widout vishuns uv er better wurl, widout dat onpurchasabul feelin' dat cums to us when we knows we dun right—widout even de blessed Book. But he didn't. An' so we dream on to de last an' hope to de last, an' b'leeve we gwinter be better an' stronger to-morrer an' cling to de Good Book fur de sweetes' promis' uv dem all—de promis' dat we'll live ergin.

"No, sah," he continued, as he threw off his solemn tone and brightened up a bit, "no, sah, sho' es you live right you'll git younger es you gro' older. Why, sah, de oldes' man or woman in de wurl am de middle-aiged, chillun-raisin', money-makin', bizness-wurryin', ain't-got-no-time-to-eat folks. Dey am de ole ones, fur older den de gray haids lak me dat dun laid erside all dese heah trashy things an' got to romantin' ergin.

"Why, whut you reckon I wus thinkin' erbout to-night?" asked the old man, as he looked sheepishly around at the doorway, in which sat Aunt Dinah, his wife. This dusky lady had been listening, apparently unconcerned at the old man's narration, but filling the still night air with the fragrant breath of "deer tongue and Williamson leaf," as the smoke curled up from her newly-made cob pipe.

"Thinkin' about marrying again?" I asked, as I glanced suspiciously at Aunt Dinah, and then I watched her shuffle her feet disdainfully as she stopped smoking long enough to remark laconically:

"Jest let 'im go on, young Marster—let 'im superseed," she said as she followed her usual custom of throwing in some big word sounding something like the one she was trying to use. "Let 'im superseed. He has dese fits ever, now an' den, an' de bes' way ter stop 'im am to let 'im run down lak you hafter do dese heah old-fashuned clocks. Whut er indebibul wurkin' appleratus he'd be," she said ironically, "ef he wus only es game in der tater patch as he am in de moonlight."

The old man glanced sorrowfully at the doorway and continued: "Ternight I jes' gotter thinkin' erbout my young Mistis, Miss Kitty, de younges' dorter uv Marse Robert Young; de chile uv his ole aige, by his secon' wife, de pooty leetle Yankee guv'ness dat cum down frum Bosting. She cum down ter teach ole Marster's yudder gals, but she got ter luvin' her skolers so she married dey daddy so she cud be er mammy to 'em. Ain't it strange how wimmen folks will git up eny

kinder excuse to marry on? Wy, I knowed, 'em ter marry fur indergestion an' dat tired feelin'," laughed the old darky, as he winked at me and then glanced at the cabin door.

"Wal, she made 'em er good muther an' ole Marster er good wife, ef she did luve cod-fish balls an' baked beans. An' her dorter, Miss Kitty! Why, man erlive, dat Yankee cross on our Southern stock jes' got up de pooties' gal dat ever said 'Yas' to young luve. She had all de brains an' intellec' uv her mammy's side wid all de grace an' beauty an' high breedin' an' lily-complecshun uv us Youngs. Her mammy was allers dead in fur edercashun, an' so ole Marster saunt an' got 'er three guv'nesses; one fur edercashun, one fer musicashun, an' one fur dressercashun; an' my! how she did shine when she growed up! She wus de pooties' gal dat ever trod blue grass, de queenlies' one dat ever gethered up her trail, an' de sweetes' one dat ever pulled er rose in er golden bower whar de hunny-suckers gethers de dew-draps an' de turkel dove sings in de moonlight. I wus de kerridge driver an' kep' de horses, an' es I uster drive her about an' see her wid all her grace an' beauty git in an' out de kerridge, I tell you I wus thankful it wus me dat had charge uv her an' not my ancestors in Affercur—fur dey would have et 'er up, thinkin' she wus sum kinder plumidged bird uv de golden pheasant tribe.

"Endurin' her seventeenth yeah, Marse Robert's bes' frien' died in Alerbama an' lef' Marse Robert gyardeen fur his son, Henry Robert Littleton, an' he soon cum out to Tennessee 'kose he had no close kin

livin' an' Marse Robert wanted to raise 'im, though he wus nineteen dat fall. An' he wus er fine young man, sah; es gentle es er gal an' es nervy es er red-bird in de settin' time. Ef by accerdent he got in de wrong, he'd mighty nigh stan' enythin' to git right ergin; but onc't in de right he'd fight fur er eyelash. Wy, I onc't seed 'im 'pollergize to de overseer, who was allers over-barin' an' cussin', 'stead uv actin'. Jes' think uv it! 'pollergize to de overseer! 'kose he happen not to know de overseer's orders one day an' saunt one uv de han's on ernudder erran'. T'would er made no diff'rence ef he hadn't 'pollergized fur it, but common trash can't stan' quality an' allers mistakes gentleness fur lak uv grit, an' Marse Henry's humbleness made de po' white trash uppish an' he snapped out dat he didn't spec no better raisin' from er boy had cum frum sech er cracker state es Alerbama —hoo—hoo—e!—dat's es fur es he got—Marse Henry knocked 'im down three times befo' he cud git up onc't.

"Bringin' two sech nachurs togedder under de same roof am mighty nigh de same thing es mixin' shampain an' red lips, an' I seed de thing wus fixed up betwixt 'em befo' ole Marster caught on an' saunt de boy, as he called 'im, to Ferginny to finish his aigucashun. But dat didn't do no good; enybody dat had ever seed Miss Kitty en' cud ferget 'er ain't de kinder folks de gods luve ter kill young, an' arter he ben dar fo' yeahs an' finish his aigucashun heah he cum back to Tennessee ergin. 'Yore haid's level, Marse Henry,' sez I to myself; 'de right kinder man don't fall in luve but onc't an' den he strikes de pyore metal or de wuss

pocket uv flint dat ever turned er pick; an' in yore case ef you ain't struck de pore metal I's black!'

"An' I's heurd uv Romeo an' Greece an' all dem ole luvers," said the old man learnedly, "but de way dese heah two young folks luved one ernudder befo' de summer went by wus ernuf to make all de yudder aiges take in deir signs. Dat's de happies' time uv ever'body's life, enyhow," he soliloquized: "We ain't got much brains at dat stage, 'kose Nachur didn't intend us ter have 'em; ef we did we wouldn't git kotch in de trap she sets fur us—de trap uv matermony. Arter we gits kotched," said the old man as he shook all over with quiet laughter—"arter we gits kotched, we's lak de fox in de fable dat got his tail in de steel trap—we kerry it roun' wid us ever'whar we go an' make out lak hits des whut we wus lookin' fur all de time, an' er butiful ornerment—but, Lor, hit pinches mighty hard all de same."

(A vigorous, jerky puffing in the doorway and clouds of outraged smoke went up to the stars!)

"An' whut you reckon my idee uv Heaben is?" queried the old man emphatically. "Hit's er blessed place way up on sum star, whar de Good Marster 'lows us ter fall in luve ever' day, but never 'lows us ter spile de dream by marryin'—fur dat would sho' bust up Heaben!" he said as he shot another look at the doorway. "An' I kin prove it by de Scripturs deysef," he continued. "Don't de Scripturs say 'dar shall be no marryin' nur givin' in marriage?' an' don't dey also teech us dat up in Heaben we will all luv one ernudder? Well, jes, put dem two argyments toged-

der an' tell me how you gwinter git erround 'em, sah? Don't dat prove de p'int?"

"I don't wish to get around them," I laughed, "they seem to be good doctrine; but go on with your story."

"Wal, sah, de match wus de talk uv de country, as bein' de mos' suiterabules' one dat ever wus.

"Marse Henry an' Miss Kitty! When I thinks uv dem ternight I kin see de dew on de young grass uv life, de roses in de gyarden uv luve, an' de stars in de skies uv happiness. I smell de flowers uv de past ergin lak dey uster smell when I wus young. I see de long walks in de shade uv de ellums an' de oaks, an' de breaf uv de primroses floats over de gyarden. I see de hoss-back rides when de flutter uv Miss Kitty's ribbon meant de flag uv de yunerverse to Marse Henry, an' de perfume on her bit uv lace han'kerchief brought up de sweetes' fragrance frum de depths uv his hart. Her eyes wus so bright dey'd bring him up befo' day, lak de sun befo' its time, an' her cheeks wus es butiful es de mohnin' skies erbloom.

"Oh, dar am luves an' luves, but dar am only jes' one fus' luve fur us all. De make-shifts arter dat am lak tryin' to make de red rosebud bloom twict.

"But sumhow ruther ole Marster had his haid sot on er young lawyer in town dat dey called Capin' Estes, dat wus also courtin' Miss Kitty, lak ever'body else dat seed 'er, an' ole Marster looked wid mo' favor on his suit dan he did on Marse Henry's, on account uv de relashunship betwixt 'em. But dar's where ole Marster missed it, an' de onlies' time I urver knowed 'im

miss it. But dis feller wus slick, an' he done it all wid de leetle insterment in 'is jaw. He was allers talkin' erbout de constertooshunal perogatives uv de divine right uv freemen' an' er makin' law speeches in de Jestis court an' er windin' up wid 'my country, my muther, my Gord, an' my feller citizens', fer he was sech er demijug he allers put de citizens highes'. Ef he wasn't free wind at de rasho uv 16 ter 1, an' de onlimited coinage uv brass, my name ain't Washingtun! Wy, he cu'd talk on fo' things at de same time, pocket er fee on bof sides uv er case, an' keep one eye on de bar-room an' de yuther on de church steeple. He cu'd play poker lak er gambler, drink lak er Kansas drought, an' pray lak er country deacon. He cu'd get drunk lak er sinner, an' yit stan' highes' es er saint; mak luve wid one eye to Miss Kitty an' yit keep de yuther solemnly sot fur ole Marster lak St. Paul watchin' fur revolushuns!

"But de thing soon cum ter er end. Marse Henry was too honerbul to court er gal widout her daddy's say-so, an' de Chewsday befo' Easter him an' ole Marster had er long talk in de library. Den Marse Henry cut out sorry lak an' solemn an' he tells me ter take extry keer uv Jap—das wus his half thurrerbred saddle hoss—an' ter rub 'im down well, an' ter feed 'im oats, not er grain uv cohn. 'Fur', sez he, 'Wash, I's er gwine erway furever!'

"An' dat night I seed er ghost! Hit wus jes' arter Marse Henry started off. I hilt his sturrup an' beg 'im wid tears in my eyes not ter leave us: 'Who gwi' he'p me take keer uv de hosses now an' pick out de

yearlin' fur de spring races? Who dis nigger gwi' foller arter de houn's in de spring an' de patterges in de fall? Who gwi' be de mohnin' sun uv de place in de strength uv his truth an' honer, an' de sweet moonlight in his tender senterment an' simplicity? Who gwi' set de 'zample 'mong de young folks fur dat conshus quietness dat cums wid de knowledge uv gameness dat am afeered uv nothin' but doin' wrong? O, Marse Henry! Marse Henry, we can't let you go!'

"I hilt on ter his sturrups an' beg 'im ergin an' ergin, fur sumhow I felt lak I'd nurver see 'im eny mo'. But he only grip my han' ergin an' ergin, an' look at me good-by—good-by—wid his eyes, fur he cuden't talk, an' rode off in de gloom down de big row uv ellums. An' dars whar I seed er ghost! De fus' one I ever seed! Fur es I stood watchin' 'im wid sumpin' lak er pound weight in my throat, an' mighty nigh er ton in my heart, I seed dat ghost plain es I ever seed enything! He hed got nearly to de gate in de dark uv de big overshadowin' trees whar de new moon wus tangled up in de lim's (sho' sign er bad luck!) when out slip de ghost frum behind er big tree an' I lakter drap in my tracks! De lump went down in my throat, but great Gord, how my hair riz! De ghost wus dressed in er windin' sheet uv white an' wid long hair hangin' down er back, an' she skeered Jap so he bolts an' snorts; an' she muster skeered Marse Henry too, fur I seed 'im stoop down ter grab dat ghost an' save hisse'f, an'—an'—den—fo' Gord! I kno' yo' won't believe it, but Marse Henry jes' kissed dat ghost time an' ergin an' I heurd 'im say 'furever,

my darling,' er sumpin' dat sounded lak it, an' den Jap's gallup clattered up de pike an' de young Marster dat I luve so well wus gone!

"De naixt thing we heurd, Marse Henry wus way down in Fluridy, an' de naixt he hed jined General Lopez wid de five hundred Americans dat went over ter he'p de Cubans fight fer liberty. An' dey got er fighter when dey got Marse Henry! Hit was bred in 'im, fur it cum jes' es nachul fur us Scotch-Irish ter fight fur liberty—enybody's liberty an' eny kinder liberty—es it is fer er game cock ter crow when he sees de fus' beam uv daylight.

"But you've read history an' kno' how dat fight ended. Marse Henry beat 'em time an' ergin, but arter erwhile de leetle ban' was overpowered by de whole Spanish army, an'—wal'—he wiped away a tear—"dem dat didn't die in de fight wus hung up lak dorgs! All but Marse Henry—brave, generous, noble Marse Henry! De papers said dat he erlone wus shot, dat he giv de Spanish officers ole Jap, de horse he luved so well, ef he'd shoot 'im lak er sojer, an' not hang 'im lak er spy! An' dey shot 'im fer doin' whut wus bred in 'im ter do, when two uv his gran'daddies follered de flag uv Green's brigade in No'th Calliner, or helped whip ole Ferguson at King's Mountain.

"Wal sah, de news lakter kill us. Hit hurt even ole Marster, fur I uster heah him walkin' de library flo' an' talkin' erbout it to hisself: 'De boy wus too high strung,' he would say. 'I did not want 'im to leave us. I had no idea he wus gwine on dat fool filler-

buster!' An' den he would storm erroun' dat room an' git hot under de collar as he thort how contrary to de rules uv war dey had acted in shootin' Marse Henry, an' den all at onct I see 'im tak down de ole sword his daddy wore at King's Mountain, an' es he fotch it down wid er bang on de library table lak he thort de whole Spanish army wus dar, he sez: 'Damn dem Spanish dorgs! Dey am nuffin' but hired cowards, an' I cud tak er regerment uv Tennessee troops lak dat brave boy an' give de Union de leetle islan' es er birf-day gif.' Damn 'em, I say!' Oh, ole Marster wus sho' mad, an' when he got mad in er righteous cause he cud mak eny body ershamed uv his cussin' record!

"An' Miss Kitty!—I jes' can't talk erbout it widout chokin' up. Fur two yeahs she went in deep mournin', his own widder cuden't er tuck on wusser, fur she nurver smiled an' noboddy wus 'lowed ter menshun Marse Henry's name, hit seemed to 'fect her so!

"But Time am Sorrow's doctah," sagely continued the old man, "an' his poultice will draw out de sharpes' pain!

"Five long yeahs passed, an' Estes had got high up in pollertics; he started out on er brass basis an' went frum postmaster ter Congress. He'd er gone ter Heaben ef he could er worked it through er pollitercal convenshun!

"An' now, whut you reckon? De news cum dat he gwine ter marry Miss Kitty—an' sho' 'nuff—hits' true!

"When I foun' hit out, I gin up all faith in mankind

in gin'ral an' womankind in perticler. But den I felt sorry fur Miss Kitty when I larnt dat she wus jes' gwine ter marry 'im to please 'er old daddy—fur she'd do enything honorbul fur ole Marster—an' dat she tole Estes she would marry 'im but dat she would allers luve Marse Henry. She nurver tole me, mind you, but one night I seed it plainer den wurds kin tell. I seed it an' knowed 'er heart wus in Marse Henry's grave. I seed er ghost ergin, but hit wus Marse Henry's ghost dis time.

"Dis wus de Chewsdy night befo' Easter, jes' five yeahs to de night dat Marse Henry went away. De big weddin' wus ter cum off de naixt night an' de house wus full uv comp'ny an' cakes. Miss Kitty nurver smiled, but hed gone erbout all day lak de Greek maiden spotless an' pyore, dat de skule books tell us dey useter kill to de wicket idols.

"Dat night I had gone ter sleep thinkin' erbout Marse Henry, an' how Jap useter stan' in de fust stall naixt to de door; how Marse Henry aller useter cum whistlin' outen de house when he wanted me to saddle Jap, an' how we useter talk erbout de hosses, an' go to de races an' hooraw ef our hoss won. I wus jes' thinkin' how open an' manly he wus, an' how fur erpart he wus frum dat Estes es de two ends uv Eternity, an' den, whut you reckon? I heurn Marse Henry cum outen de house lak he did in de days uv old. I heurd 'im cum down to de stable do', an' pop his ridin' whup es er signal fer me ter bring up Jap, an' den slash his whup on his leg while he waited—jes' lak he useter do hundreds uv times befo', an' all so nachul

lak, jes' lak he wus gwinter ride ole Jap ergin arter de houn's. An' den, sah, I heurd his voice jes' es plain es I urver heurn annything an' jes' lak he useter say, only hit seemed so faint an' fur erway: 'Hello, Wash, saddle Jap! It's time we wus takin' er han' in de fun!' heurd it so plain, I jumped outen de bed, an' said es I rushed to open de do', 'I's cumin', Marse Henry, I's cumin'!' But when I open de do' I wus so diserpinted I lak ter cried, fur I cuden't see nuffin' but de trees in de dim moonlight, an' I heurd nuffin' but de hoot uv de owl over in de woods. I felt so cuis I cuden't go ter sleep, fur I wus sho' Marse Henry's sperit wus summers erbout, an' dat he cuden't rest in his grave on ercount uv de weddin', an' I jes' walked down to de gate whar I last seed 'im five yeah befo' go down de road, nurver ter cum back eny mo'; ever'thing wus so nachul I thought I heurd Jap's footfalls ergin, an' den!—whut wus dat I seed all dressed in white wid her long hair hangin' down her back an' kneelin' down under de tree whar she last seed Marse Henry erlive, an' sobbin' lak her hart wud break? De same ghost I seed dat night five years ergo. I cuden't stan' an' look at sech sacred grief as dat, so I went in my house thinkin' maybe de las' one wusn't er ghost sho' 'nuff, but jes' Miss Kitty prayin' at de tree she last seed Marse Henry erlive an' weepin' de las' time she cud honorably weep fur 'im.

"De naixt day wus de big day, but I cuden't stay dar an' see dat sacrilege. 'Sides dat, I felt cuis 'bout seein' Marse Henry's ghost, an' I knowed sumpin' wus gwine happen. I knowed it fur sho' when I went

in de kitchen next mohnin' an' heurd sister Ca'line tell how she found er screech owl in Miss Kitty's room dat mohnin'. Sez I to mysef: 'Dar! I knows whut gwinter happen now. Po' innercent angel! She'll nurver live twell termorrow–but thank Gord fur it, fur dat yudder Screech Owl will nurver git in her room!

"But when I went to de stable, dar wus ernudder sign: Ole Flint, Marse Henry's ole pet houn', an' de bes' one dat ever smelt er deer track, wus stone dead in de stall, dead frum er snake bite, too! 'Dat's dat Estes doin's ergin,' sez I. 'Po' innercent Miss Kitty!' An' de cows wus pawin' an' lowin' at de pastur bars! Now ever'body knows dat when de milk cows go ter pawin' an' 'lowin' in de mohnin' befo' brekfus, somebody gwinter die befo' night. I stood even dat, but I gin up when I went to de well ter draw water fur de horses, fur dar wus Miss Kitty jes' as plain es she cud be, laid out in her coffin in her bridal dress!

"I drapped dat bucket an' lit out frum dar!

"An 'I went to ole Marster an' beg 'im to let me go down to de lower place, five miles erway; an' I went to de lower place, five miles erway, an' dar I stayed all day long waitin' fur de calamerty to cum, an' groanin' in de sperit lak de proffit uv ole when he know de buterful city gwinter fall. Fur I seed Miss Kitty dead jus' es plain es I see you!

"Oh, dat wus er turribul day, an' one dat I'll nurver furgit, an' I sot dar in de cabin an' fasted, an' didn't eat nuffin all day, an' wrastled wid de sperit in prayer, all day long.

"De weddin' wus ter cum off at nine er clock at

night. I wus settin' in de cabin do' myself; all de yudder darkies had gone to de big house fur de weddin' supper, but I didn't wanter go; I hed no stummic dat night—I wus all hart, thinkin' 'bout po Marse Henry an' Miss Kitty's fun'ral dat I knowed wus bleeged ter cum!

"Jes' es de clock struck nine, I heard er hoss cum up de pike, clatter, clatter, bipperty, bipperty, bipperty, an' I jumped up mighty nigh er yard high!

"I knowed de soun' uv dem feet! I'd kno' 'em in er million—dem wus Jap's feet, an' I hollered, glory hallyluyer! Befo' I knowed whether ter run under de bed or out on de pike—fur I wus sorter skeered an' sorter brave—er big, strong, fine-lookin' man, es brown es er race hoss, pulled up his hoss, covered wid sweat an' foam, at de do'. Pulled up his hoss quick lak an' nachul—too nachul fur dis nigger, fur jes' de moshun uv de han' fotch de tears to my eyes—fur dat hoss wus Jap, de same blood-lak, cordy-legged, big-nostriled, graceful Jap uv old!

"An grate Gord! One look in de blue eyes uv de rider, de fine mouf, de frank, manly face, now bronzed an' er trifle stern, hit wus Marse Henry! Marse Henry!

"I jumped up an' sed, 'O Marse Henry, ghost er no ghost, I's gwinter hug you!'—an' I did, hugged him an' Jap, too.

"An' Marse Henry laf an' sed: 'Wash, my boy, I'm no ghost, but flesh an' blood, an' awful hongry flesh at dat. What am you doin' way down heah? Give us sumpin' ter eat, fur I'm anxious to git on to de ole place an' we need sumpin' to brace us up. Jap an'

I have cum over fifty miles sence daylight, an' while dat's no long ride fur us, you kno' we bleeged ter have sumpin' ter run on,' he sed laffin'.

"Lor,' sonny, you jes' orter seed me hustle erroun'! An' whiles I wus fixin' 'im sumpin' to eat, he tole me all erbout it, how he hed jined Lopez an' sailed frum Key West, an' all erbout de fights he hed. An' he sed dat he wuz de onlies' one left uv all his men, an' dat he owed his life to Jap's heels an' er Spanish gineral. He sed dat when he stormed Las Pozas, his men run over de Spaniards an' whupped 'em in er twinkle, an' dat sum uv his men begun to hang de Spaniards in return fur hangin' sum uv dairs de yeah befo', but when he foun' it out he tried to stop it an' he run in an' cut down de Spanish gineral dat dey hed hung up, but dat his men got mad even wid him an' mutinied an' he hed to draw his pistols on his men an' cut down de officer at de point uv his guns, 'kase he sed he wan't fightin' er hangin' war but er civilized war.

"An he saved de officer's life an' exchanged 'im an' saunt 'im home. De papers wus right in sayin' Marse Henry wus arterwards overpowered an' hed ter surrender, an' de dozen er two left wus sentenced to be hanged. In vain Marse Henry beg 'em to shoot 'em lak soljers, but dey hung his men befo' his eyes, an dey wooder hung him, but he bribed de officer in charge wid de gift uv Jap to 'low 'im to be shot and not hung!

"De naixt mohnin' when dey led Marse Henry off to be shot, an' when he wus er mile or two frum de lines, de gineral whose life he hed saved wus waitin' at de spot fur 'im, an' commanded de squad to halt, an'

den he give Marse Henry his side-arms an' Jap, dat he foun' de officer wid, an' he sed to Marse Henry: 'Go; you saved my life onct at de risk uv yo' own. I return de compliment.'

"An' den Marse Henry told me how he hed went in de sugar bizness an' made er fortune an' now he cum back ergin to live.

" 'But dat wus five yeah ago, Marse Henry,' sez I; 'Why ain't you cum home befo' or write us dat you still livin?' An' den Marse Henry's face grew dark es he sed: 'Bekase, Wash, Unkle Robert wrote me befo' de war wus ended dat Kitty wus married to Estes, an'—'

" 'Dat's er lie, Marse Henry,' I shouted, es I cum to my senses ergin an' thout uv Miss Kitty fur de fust time—'Dat's er lie! Ole Marster didn't write no sech letter es dat! She ain't married yit—leastwise—dat is ter say—O Marse Henry, am it nine erclock yit? An' she nurver will be fur she's boun' ter die ternight, an' I's waitin' out heah to kno' when to go to de fun'ral—po' innercent angel!' an' I 'spec' I begun ter cry.

"Marse Henry look at me stern lak, an' ax me what I mean. Den I went back an' tole 'im all, an' I seed de tears run down his cheeks es I tole 'im how she hed loved an' suffered all dese yeahs. An' tole 'im 'bout de ghost scene las' night an' how she sobbed under de trees, an' es I tole him I seed 'im shake all over lak er child er sobbin', an' when I tole him 'bout de nurver failin' death signs I'd seen dis mohnin', an' dat I 'spec' right now she dun dead er married—'twould be all de

same to her—he vaulted wid one leap in de saddle an' I seed Jap's tail fly up es he plunged two spurs in his side, an' es he shot erway in de night I heurd 'im say sorter hard lak: 'Foller me, Wash, fur I's gwinter take er hand in dat fun'ral!'

"I jumped on er race filly ole Marster hed in trainin' at de lower place, an' I follered 'im wid my heart beatin' er drum in my breast, an' de wind playin' er fife in my two years! Lor', sah, dat filly cud fly! but run es she mout, dar sot Marse Henry allers jes' erhaid, lookin' lak er statue on Jap; an' de ole hoss runnin' lak er swamp buck wid de pack at his heels! Runnin,' sah, lak he knowed whut wus up an' dat ten minnits now wus wurth yeahs termorrer! An' ever' now an' den I'd ketch er glimpse uv Marse Henry's back an' heah 'im say: 'Grate Gord, ef I kin only git dar in time!'

"Nobody'll ever b'leeve it," continued the old man, "but we broke de five mile recurd dat night, sho! An' when we cum to de house it wus lit up frum garret to cellar an' I cud see de guests in de parlors an' halls an' heah de music an' de lafter. But es I rid up closter, my hart sunk in my buzum, an' we bofe pulled up wid er jerk; fur dar, standin' dar in de light uv de bay winders wid flowers above an' belo' an' in de lace uv de curtains, dar stood Miss Kitty! An' de orange blossums wus in her hair, an' er man wus by her side, an' dey wus shakin' han's wid de people.

"Grate Gord, dey wus married!

"I looked at Marse Henry, 'spectin' to see 'im pale an' shaky lak I wus, an' mighty nigh ready ter fall

down offen his hoss, but dars whar I overlooked de thurrerbred dat wus in 'im, an' stead uv bein' pale, de luve light wus in his eyes, but he hed dat cuis hard smile on his lips dat allers made me think uv de cocked hammer uv er hair-trigger durringer.

"He spurred up clost to me an' jes' es nachul lak es ef he wus tellin' me ter saddle Jap, an' jes' es quiet es ef he wus gwine to church, he sez: 'Wash, be keerful now fur you may save er life wid er level haid. I will ride up to de side porch, jes' whar it reaches to Jap's saddle skirts. I mus' speak to Kitty once mo' befo' I go back to Cuba forever. Slip in an' tell her sum one wants to see her quickly, on de side po'ch. Go, an' remember your haid!'

"I wus glad ernuf to go. All de sarvants wus now pourin' in to shake han's wid Miss Kitty, arter de white folks hed shook, an' I cum in nacherly wid de res'. De white folks hed stood back an' wus watchin' our awkward way, an' de room wus full uv flowers an' sweet sents an' hansum folks.

"But Miss Kitty jes' hanted me—I cuden't keep my eyes offen her. She wus es butiful es truth in de halls uv de angels, an' yet es sad es sorrow at de grave uv her fust born. She look lak er queen bowin ' right an' left, an' her grace shone lak er pillar in er temple. She tried her bes' ter smile on us po' niggers dat had raised her an luved her all her life, but de smile jes' flickered 'round her dark, sad eyes lak er April sunbeam tryin' to git out frum behind er March cloud. When she shuck han's wid me I seen two tears start up in her eyes, lak little silver-side fish dat rise to de sur-

face uv de lake fur air, an' I knowed she wus thinkin' uv Jap an' his rider, an' I cuden't stan' it no longer; I jes' stuck my big mouf up to her lily bloom uv er yeah an' tried to say it easy, but it seemed to me de folks heurd it over at quartahs, er mile erway: 'Gord bless yo,' Miss Kitty, honey! But cum out on de side po'ch, quick!'

"Fur er secon' she looked at me lak she thort I wus crazy, an' den I tried ergin, steppin' on her butiful dress an' little white slipper, I got up so close an' whispered so yearnestly:

" 'Miss Kitty! Miss Kitty!! fur Gord's sake cum out on de side po'ch, quick!'

"She nodded her haid, an' I seed she thort sumbody wus in distress, an' es I went out, I seed her excuse herself to de guests an'—an'—wal, de feller dat wus standin' in de winder wid 'er, an' den she gethered her trail in her lef' han' an' follered me out es stately es Pharo's darter follered de niggers uv old."

Here the old man paused, and a look of triumph glinted in his dim eye, as he said, "Dar am sum scenes in life fixed on our mem'ry so dey git plainer es we gro' older, an' dis wus one. De happiness uv two lives wus at stake, an' I trimbled so I cuden't think, fur I knowed er wurd too soon or too late or out uv place would ruined ever'thing. De poppin' uv er match might er brought on er shootin' an' de whinny uv er black hoss es he stood blacker in de night mout er turned er weddin' inter er fun'ral.

"I glanced at de side po'ch—dar sot er black hossman on er steed es black es he wus. Not er muscle

moved but I seed two steel-blue eyes shine even in de darkness. Den out cum Miss Kitty, so nachul lak, an' soft an' easy:

" 'What is it, Uncle Wash; who wishes to see me?'

"I p'inted to de hossman. Den I heurd her step es she walked ercross to de shadder, an' den I heurd er voice cum outer de shadder: 'Oh, Kitty, my darlin,' have you indeed forgotten me?'

"To my dyin' day I'll see her es she hesertated, tried to advance, stopped, staggered, an' fell into de outstretched arms uv de hossman, es she exclaimed pitifully: 'Dear heart, I tole them all de time I wus yores!'

"An' whut you reckon Marse Henry dun? He kissed dat man's wife scanlus, time an' ergin, an' stead uv spurrin' erway wid her lak I spected to see 'im do, an' lak enybody else wooder dun, he jes' walked wid 'er, dead fainted es she wus, right inter de parlor whar dey all wus, an' laid her gently down on er sofer, an' den he turned 'round lak er majah gineral reviewin' troops, an' he said: 'Unkle Robert, I have a word to say heah!'

"Wal, sah, 'mazement wan't de wurd. De wimmin screamed an' de men looked lak dey wanted to. Even ole Marster cuden't do nuffin' but stare. Estes cum to fust an' made er quick movement to git to de sofer whar Miss Kitty wus, quiet es er sperit. But when Marse Henry seed 'im, his eyes flashed lak two stars, an' I dodged my haid spectin' to heah er pistol shot naixt, but I didn't, only dis frum Marse Henry, 'an is cum

from 'im lak er battery, es he laid one han' on er instrument dat hed bin all through de Cuban fight.

"An' den he tuhned loose. Gord, sah, he towered over Estes lak er lion dat hed cum home an' foun' er cur in his house. An' all de time his eyes shone lak lightnin' an' his face wus sot lak er jedge's, an' his voice wus lak er god's! He pulled de forged letter out an' ole Marster read it, an' Miss Kitty cum to an' read it, an' he tole Miss Kitty how he writ to her time an' ergin an' at las' got dis letter. An' she cried lak her heart would break, an' she tole how she hed writ to him time an' ergin befo' she heurd he wus dead, an' nurver got no letter, an' befo' I knowed it I jes' hollered: 'O, hit pays to be postmaster, it do!'

„An', sah, whut do you reckon ole Marster dun? He jes' hugged Marse Henry an' wrung his han' an' call 'im his son, an' den he got so mad he lost his ole haid, an' cum runnin' out in de hall, an' sed: 'Wash! Wash! Bring me my pistols, Wash! The forgin' villian to dare marry er gemman's darter!'

"In er minnit he cum runnin' back wid er pair uv durrungers in his han's an ernudder pair in his eyes, an' he rushed up to Marse Henry an' sed: 'Henry, my son, you shan't kill 'im! Let yore ole uncle have dat pleasure. The forger! Why, he married my darter, n' I thort he wus er gemman!'

"But Estes wus gone, gone to parts unknown. An' Miss Kitty wus laffin an' cryin', in Marse Henry's arms, befo' all de guests an' ever'body, an' ole Marster stop sorter sho't-lak, when he seed 'er, fur he wa'n't perpared fur dat, an' Marse Henry laffed an' pulled out

ernudder paper—er little slip uv paper, an' den he sed: 'In de sweetness uv dis hour I furgive 'im, Unkle. Besides, he ain't married yo' darter. Dis little instrument am jes' five yeahs de oldes'. I'm sorry, Unkle,' he sed wid er twinkle in he's eyes dat belied his appollergy, 'but I married Kitty de night befo' I lef' five yeah, ago. Heah is de license an' dis am Squire Sanders' signature—an' — wy hello, Squire, I'm glad to see you ergin!'—es Squire Sanders an' all de folks he knowed flocked erroun' 'im to shake his han'.

"Gord, sah, dat wus er happy night! But nuffin' wud do ole Marster but dey mus' be married over ergin by de Piskolopium preacher, an' in gran' style, too.

"So in erbout er hour Marse Henry cum out, dressed in der unerform uv er majah-gineral, an' dey wus married ergin—an de hansomes' pair dat ever sed yes to de preacher. An' when I went up to shake dey han's, Marse Henry tell me to stan' by he's side, an' den he pull out ernudder paper, one jes' freshly writ, an' he read it to all de folks—thank Gord, he had bought me frum ole Marster!

"An ' den he turned roun' to me, nigger dat I wus, an' he sed wid er tear in he's manly eye: 'Wash, er true frien' am er jewel on de finger uv life. I fout too hard fur de freedom uv others to see my bes' frien' er slave. I have bought yo' frum Unkle Robert, es dis bill uv sale will show. Take it; you are free!'

"I drapped at his feet an' cried an' kissed his han', but he pulled me up, an' es he put five big gol' pieces

in my han' he laffed an' sed: 'An these are frum my wife, for valuabul assistance rendered at her fun'ral!'

"An' es I kissed her sweet han', Gord bless her, she looked up at Marse Henry laffin' by her side, an' de smile she give him wus lak de break uv day in Heaben!"

THE EXAMINATION

"MARSE JOHN," said Uncle Wash the other night, "I's got to hol' 'Zamination fur teacher over in my Deestrick, an' I wants you to write out de questions. I's Deestrick Cummisherner over dar fur culler'd fo'ks an' not one uv 'em can git license to teach or preach or git married unless I pass on dey pedigree. An' whils't you 's writing' out de quest'ons Marse John, jes' be good enough to write the answers too. It's er mighty po' teacher that ain't got his answers es reddy es his questu'ns. An' I wish you'd jes' go erlong wid me and see me squelsh dem smart-ike niggers that thinks they kno's it all."

I knew this meant fun for me, so I went. On the day appointed there were three applicants; one was a pompous looking darkey with a knack of saying things grandiloquently and using big words. The old man named him Pompey, though his real name, I learned, was Green Washington Shadrock Smith.

Number two was a sanctified, ashen and solemn faced negro who was studying for the ministry, very pious outwardly and exceedingly cautious of committing himself, but possessed of abundant conceit. His brass and assurance were great.

The old man called him Parson.

The other was a little sharp-eyed coon, always in a grin, but with an air of really being outclassed among two such worthies as Pompey and the Parson, but who

took his chances anyway, for the job paid fifty dollars a month.

They called him Swipe.

Nothing pleased the old man more than to show off his own learning before the helpless applicants, and to rub it in when occasion demanded. Slowly and with much dignity he put on his big, iron-rimmed glasses, unrolled learnedly his manuscript and shot out this grandiloquent flow of learning, calculated to squelch any too presumptious candidate for the honors of the Academy.

"Now I's gwinter ax you all er few supernumerous quest'ons cal'erlated to disembody de fundermentals uv yo' understandin' for impartin' informashun! An' I wants you to chirp out es pert as er jaybird on er Friday."

There is a negro superstition to the effect that jaybirds go to a place unmentionable on Friday and carry sand to his Satanic Majesty. I wondered if it was a hint of what the old man had in store for them.

Adjusting his glasses again the old man asked the Preacher:

"Whut is jogerfy?"

The answer came back assuringly and glibly:

"Jogerfy is de science uv de earth an' de art of navigation."

The old man squinted one eye and said witheringly:

"Den I suppose you'd say er coon-dog wus de science uv de woods an' de art in barkin'. "Nex."

"Jogerfy"—said Pompey—"jogerfy—Br'er Washingtun ain't dat got sumpin' nurr to do sorter lak er

narrer neck jinin' two dimijohns uv lan', sorter lak it an' so fo'th or sumpin' lak it?"

"Wal', it may smell uv the jug er leetle," said the old man, "but it don't jine de demi-john to de extent uv pullin' out de cork! Nex'."

"Jogerfy," said the Swipe, "is de art uv joggin' and de science uv gwine round circles."

This set the old man to thinking. He scratched his head and inspected the candidate closely. "Ain't you de nigger dat use to swipe old Hal P'inter when he went to de races?"

"Yassir."

"Wal, dat ain't zactly right, but it's got mo' sense in it dan anythin' dat's been sed, an' I'll give you ten, as you seem to have sum hoss sense in yo' make-up."

Fortunately I was where I could lean back behind the blackboard and save the dignity of the examination. For all this had been said with a dignity and earnestness that was appalling, and not the slighest trace of humor appeared in their voices

"How am Tennessee bounded?" resumed the old man.

"She's bounded by straight lines makin' er parallelogram inclinin' in er right angle," came back knowingly from the Parson.

The old man scratched his jaw and passed it to the Pompey. The answer came back as glibly:

"Tennessee am bounded on de north by Kaintucky an' de rory-bory Alice, on de east by de Great Smoky mountains, on de west by Mt. Pelee an' on de south—"

The old man brought his fist down indignantly.

"Ef we 's bounded on all dem sides by de things you say dar ain't but one thing dat can nachully bind us on de south an' dat's hell! You may know er whole lot erbout dat place but you don't kno' er leetle bit 'bout jogerfy," and he put it to the Swipe.

"Tennessee is bounded," said the Swipe, "by er mighty good race track at New Orleans on the south by er better one at Lexington, Kentucky, on the north, an' there's always good horses in the east an' west."

"Still showin' hoss sense," said the old man. "I pass yo' on dat. Now lemme see what you all kno' 'bout history!"

He slowly studied out the next question:

"Relate de causes leadin' to de Riverlushunary War.'

"De circumnavigatin, cause uv de Riverlushunary War," said the Preacher glibly, "was de extenshun uv de Equator too far into de Gulf stream, endengerin' de tail uv de British Umpire."

The old man sadly shook his head and passed it to Pompay:

"Dey fit us," said Pompey—"Br'er Washin'tun, wusn't it fotched on by Injuns stealing tea offen dair ships an' flingin' it into de sea?"

"I can't jes zactly spress it kordin' to book larnin'," said the Swipe, "but it wus sorter lak dis: We drawed de pole an' axed for er squar race, but England fouled us on de fus' turn an' got us in er pocket on de half. We run into her, cut her down an' won es we pleased."

"Go head," said the old man proudly. "Hal' P'inter sho' done larned you sumpin."

This put the Swipe at the head. He scratched his chin, made eyes at the others and licked out his tongue.

"Who wus Maj. Andre?" slowly spelled out the old man.

The preacher thought he was one of the Disciples and Pompey, after much thought, said he was the man who went over Niagara in a barrel. The Swipe wasn't sure, but after a while his face lit up with a broad smile and he said:

"Uncle Wash, wusn't he er British ringer dat got unkivered an' ruled off at de West P'int meetin'? 'twas er close heat an' he lost by er neck."

"De very man," said the old man enthusiastically. "I tells you, sonny, if you keep up dis clip, yo'll break all the colts in dis deestrick." The Swipe smiled and sat up higher in the sulky. The old man studied his manuscript carefully and propounded:

"Describe de battle uv Shiloh."

"Dat's easy," said the Preacher smiling. "It wus er hard-fit fight in which Shiloh got killed."

"Oh, he did," said the old man, wrathfully. "I guess de nex' thing yo'll be tryin' to teach de ole man dat at de battle uv de Nelson, de Nile fell ofen his hoss. Nex', wut you say Pompey?"

"I don't kno' Br'er Washingtun, hit wus befo' I wus bohn!"

The old man passed it to de Swipe.

"Dat ar battle wus er dead heat 'twixt Gene'al Grant an' Johnsing, wan't it, Uncle Wash?"

"Sonny," said the old man proudly, "I's beginnin'

to think I orter resign an' let you ax dese questions. I didn't kno' dar was so much hoss sense in hist'ry."

"What am de princerpal organ uv circulation?" spelled out the old man.

Pompey thought a long time and said it was the liver. The Preacher threw up his hand and a knowing smile went over his face.

"What am it, den?" asked the teacher.

"De hat," shouted the candidate.

"Es dat's de fust time you's come nigh it I'll give you ten on dat," said the old man, "but I think de P'inter boy can do better yet."

"De princerpal organ om circulashun," said the Swipe, "am de leetle silver cartwheel dat is stamped wid de eagle.'

"Sonny," said the old man, "you have sho' been in de hoss bisness for some good. Now you Preacher man, whut was de greatest trade of England?"

"De trade-wind," came back promptly.

"Trade yo' grandmammy's black cat," said the old man, wrathfully. "What wind got to do wid dis deestrick skule? You 'pear to be mighty windy yo'se'f. Nex'."

"Wan't dat de Pennsylvania whisky resurrection?" timidly asked Pompey.

The old man glared at him. The Swipe held up his hand, and when the old man nodded, he said:

"De princerpal trade, Uncle Wash? 'Pears to me it wus when ole Richard tried to trade his kingdom for er good hoss."

The old man marked the Swipe up one more.

"Now I'es gwinter see wat you all kno' about Fizerology an' Anatermy. Au whut am de human blood composed, you Preacher man?"

"De human blood is composed uv red corkscrews an' white corkscrews," said the Preacher.

"You tarnashun fool," said the lod man, "whut you wanter put corkscrews in yo' blood fur when you can keep em in yo' pocket? Tell us all erbout de human anatermy, Pompey hit's up ter you!"

"De human anatermy," said Pompey, "is devided into three parts, de head, de chist an' de stumac. De head contains de brains, if any. De chist contains de de lights an' de liver. De stumac contains de bowels. There are five bowels, *a, e, i, o, u,* an' sometimes *w* an' *y*!"

The old man looked at him with becoming scorn. "You two fools," he said to the Preacher and Pompey, "Don't kno' ernuff to teach er houndorg to suck eggs. I's gwinter give it to *you,*" he said turning to the grinning Swipe, "fur it 'pears lak you the only nigger in dat bunch dat's got eny sense an' dat's de main thing in skule teachin' or enything else."

HO! EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH!

THE corn crop up in the Bigbyville neighborhood is clean, the cotton shows not a spear of grass. The potato field looks as clean and green as a billiard cushion floor and the darkies are still, still hoeing. All this was caused by a sermon Uncle Wash preached there on foot-washing day last month, a literal extract of which I got from the old man himself:

"Brudderin' an' Sisterin'—You'll find my text in de six chapter uv Noah's pistols to de Gentiles.

"*Ho! ever' one dat thirsteth! Ho!*

"De commandments we get from de Bible is beyond de scrutiny uv man, an' we natchurly think dat when er man gets hot an' thirsty de thing fur him to do is to hunt de spring branch an' quench his burnin' lips. But not so. Here it is sot down in black an' white in de book uv books, dat when you git thirsty, *jes' keep on hoein.'*

"*Ho! ever' one dat thirsteth! Ho!*

"And dat is right; de Bible is allers right. Hoein' is good fur de limbs, good fur de wind, good fur de crap, an' good fur de soul. De sun am hot now, but de wind'll be cold ergin. De rays pour down now, but de sleet'll come bye an' bye. Dese is de rays uv drought an' thirst, but ef you want to set back when de rains come, smoke yo' pipe an' sing dat song—

"Bile dat cabbage down
For it ain't gwine to rain no mo'—

jes' take off yo' coat, shed yo' shirt, an' foller de corn an' tater row, an' ef you git thirsty don't stop to drink, but jes' keep on er-hoein'!

"*Ho! ever'one dat thirsteth! ho!*

"An' ain't dat de law an' de sense? Whut you wanter stop an' drink fur? Won't you jes' get thirsty ergin? Keep on er-hoein'!

"What did old Noah do when de windows uv de heabens was opened an' de flood uv de great deep begun to kiver de earth, an' de fools got round him an' laughed an' ax him whut he buildin' dat ole ark for? He wus tired, an' thirsty, an' hot, but he kep' on er-hoein', for he knowed he'd get water enough bye and bye. *Ho! ever' one dat thirsteth! ho!*

"What did Abraham do when dey got roun' him an' tried to stop him from gwine to de Promis' Lan'? He kept on er hoein' fur Jordan.

"Don't let de flesh uv dis wurl' fool you. Things ain't whut dey seem. Water looks mighty good, specially to Baptists, but whut we want to do is to keep on er hoein'. De wicked uv Noah's day didn't hoe eny. Didn't dey git water enough? De Egyptians didn't hoe eny, but follered de Israelites into de Red Sea. Didn't dey get water enough? Ole Jonah didn't obey de Lord an' hoe to de mark, an' de water swallowed 'im fust an' de whale swallered 'im next. Let dat be er warnin' to you to stick to de tex' uv de Bible an' de doctrine uv de church, an' when you get thirsty keep on er-hoein'. It's hard now, but it'll be sweet bye and bye. It's hot now, but it'll be cold bye and bye. You git mighty thirsty an'

you think de taters ain't never goin' to come, but when de winter rains come, an' de winds blow, an' you set down round de big fiah wid de sweet brown 'possum an' dem taters, you work so hard fur to get in de heat, an' sweat, an' thirst uv summer, den will de heart uv de faithful be glad, den will you shout an' sing:

"Ho! ever' one that thirsteth, ho!"

This last appeal was too much. The congregation arose in a body at the words 'possum and potatoes and went off to hoe, leaving the old man with no one to pass around the hat.

THE MASCOT MULE

IT is now nearly ten years since I became thoroughly convinced that there was such a thing as a mascot. I had heard Uncle Wash talking about them and wishing for one, but I put it all down as darky talk until I fell heir to the genuine thing myself.

Since then luck has come my way in great chunks. I speak from experience. I have tried it and I know.

The mascot of all mascots is a blaze-face sorrel pacing mule, whose dam is a Hal mare.

It is easy to get a pacing mule; it is easier to get a sorrel one; but a blaze-face pacing sorrel Tom Hal mule comes only once in a generation and when he does land he is simply the greatest rabbit foot that ever ambled through the southeast side of a graveyard!

From the day that mule arrived on my farm, good luck has been mine. Up to that time the bottom had been out of everything. The banks had burst, the drouths had come, the blind-staggers, murrain and the sheriff, also the Wilson bill!

You could not give a horse away because he had to be fed; you could not borrow money on a bond; cotton, down South, was six cents a pound and a drag at that; mules, the great staple of Middle Tennessee, were correspondingly low—scarcely worth their feed; "an' de only way you can fill yo' stumic," said Uncle Wash to me one day, "is to connect yo' lips to de town pump."

He called it the "water cure!"

But worse than that—I was heartsick, for in spite of my most earnest and poetic declarations, couched in all the foxy terms of masculine deception—the Angel—the most beautiful girl in the world, remained like a block of ice in a winter refrigerator, over the door of which she had tacked this verse:

I do not love you, Dr. Fell.
The reason why I cannot tell.
But this I know and know full well—
I do not love you, Dr. Fell!

Little did I dream, when, finding myself unable to sell horses and deciding that mules might sell, that this homely creature of ears and innocence, which the next spring found ambling around the lot after my favorite old saddle mare would turn the tide of my ill-luck. But such was the fact. Not only that, but I am convinced that the arrival of that mule turned the downward tide of prices in the horse markets of this country, precipitated the war with Spain, sank the Spanish navy, freed Cuba, and brought on the Boer War (thus enabling us to sell to the empire-grabbing British a half million of our mules and horses in exchange for our silent approval while they butchered a brave and heroic people), carried our flag to the Philippines and will eventually make us arbiters of the world.

That mascot-mule did it!

Uncle Wash is a man of infinite faith, and all through these gloomy times he said he would pull through if the blackberry crop and coon-skins didn't fail us.

But "blackberry winter" hit us in May and froze everything, and the old man said that a late blackberry winter "allers make coon-skins too full uv wolves to hold water"—whatever that means—any way they failed to materialize, Even the clover failed to come up, the peas to sprout, the hens to lay. After much fishing the old man failed even to land, amid the ice floes and cold water, the usual spring eel to make the eel skin for his rheumatism, and that night he came in and immortalized himself in this remark:

" 'Taint no use, Marse John—luck's erg'in' us. They ain't nuthin' but ice aroun' heah, an' ef we'd ship er carload uv dat to hell, they'd be er freeze dar befo' daylight, an' no deman' fur it."

In this unhappy state of mind I went out the next day to find the old man bluer than ever. Dinah, his wife—for lack of hope and sufficient nourishment, I suppose—had joined the Sanctified Ones, and Parson Candlelight, the pastor of the band, had been supping there every night, to the imminent danger of the last yellow leg. Worse than that, the old man said that a northeast wind on groundhog day was sure death to the 'possum crop, and that it had blown all through groundhog day. Moreover, the jimson weeds—the only dead sure thing for chicken mites in July—had for the first time in fifty years failed to sprout in the hog pen.

I could not stand it, and I left. I did not return for three weeks, expecting to find everything dead and the farm a hole in the ground.

But the old man met me two miles up the pike, a

beam on his face. He could not wait till I reached him, but yelled out:

"Luck's changed—luck's changed, boss!"

"Where? How?" I exclaimed.

"Come an' see!" he cried.

With great pride he conducted me to the lot and showed me the new-born thing of moonlight and sorrel sunset ambling around after its dam. It looked like a blaze-faced grasshopper, a spider on stilts, a lobster in embryo. I looked at the old man in disgust, I wanted to kill him and the mule and then commit suicide. But he was chuckling around and looking so happy and positive that I finally said:

"Well, this is the last drop in the bucket—the last cuff of ill luck. If this thing had come brown or black, with a mealy nose, it might have been worth a few dollars. But this cross between a moonbeam and a jack rabbit—this parody on the Tom Hal tribe, intended by nature to be a Tennessee mule, but brazenly defying her laws by changing to the blaze-face of a nobler animal—creating all kinds of doubt as to just who and what it is—this mongrel of uncertainty, this cross between an ass and an interrogation point—is this the thing that has set you to smirking like a schoolgirl at recess and shouting and shouting *good luck* two miles up the pike like a blanked idiot?"

The old man only smiled and said dryly:

"How many mules is you urver seed in yo' life?"

"Thousands of them," I replied.

"Did you urver see er blaze-face mule befo'?"

"No—and I'm glad of it. Never want to see another one."

"Did you urver heah of enybody dat ever seed er blaze-face sorrel pacing mule?"

"Never."

"An' his dam er Hal mare?"

"Nobody was ever such a fool before," I snarled.

"It takes two things to make er sho' nuff mascot," went on the old man without noticing my ill-nature, "it must be sorter kin to de devil an' sorter partake uv de earth—lak er graveyard rabbit, or er hunchback nigger, or er mule wid er cloven foot an' er blazen face. Den it must be sump'n nobody else urver had befo'—an' dar it is, sah," he said with dignity and emphasis.

"An' now, sah, if you don't think it's jes' so come wid me an' see. De test uv de puddin' is chewin' de bag, an' I's got de bag," he chuckled.

He took me to the paddock. When I last saw her the Berkshire sow had cholera. Now she had—

"Why, old man," I shouted, "that looks like it. Ten pigs and the prettiest, slickest little fellows! Why, when—"

"Las' night," he chuckled, "ten minutes after she heerd uv dat mascot-mule."

"Well, that does look like it—good!" He chuckled, and knowingly beckoned me to follow him.

In the barn the Jersey cow had found a clean-cut sprite of a girl baby calf, with the eyes of Juno and the form of a water nymph.

"Good, good!" I cried, slapping the old man on the back. "When did—"

"Dis mornin', sah, ten minits arter she seed dat mule strike er pace!"

"Old man," I cried, "this is too good to be true! By the way, have you found out whether the mule has had all the breakfast he needs?" I asked.

"Done greased 'im wid goose foot oil an' give him er milk toddy," he said, gravely. "But dat ain't all."

He took me to the hen house and showed me a dozen nests with newly laid eggs.

"Bring out that mule medicine, old man, we'll have an egg nog! This beats Jonah and all the prophets. Old man, you ought to have been born in the days of Solomon."

He chuckled and led me to a rail fence. The jimson weeds were growing.

"Yaller laig chickens an' plenty uv 'em dis summer, if I can keep on holdin' off de preachers an' other varmints," said he. Then his face fairly beamed:

"Done fixed one alridy."

"What!"

"Brer Candlelight's 'xtinguished—his light's gone out," said he solemnly, and he went into his pocket and pulled out a dark-bordered negro funeral notice. I looked at it, shocked. I read:

"De sisterin an' brudderin uv Lonesome Neck will hol' final observashun over de remnants uv Brer Candlelight, who died axerdinterly of two much chicken gizzard, given by Br'er Washington. Intervarmint to-morrow at two o'clock. Refreshments at de grave. Sister Washington will coupon de crowd."

"This is terrible, Wash. He was a good old darky—how did it happen and what did you have to do with it?"

"O, he wus eatin' fried hen at my house an' guffawin' an' cacklin' wid Dinah, an' de gals, campin' on me ever' night sense dey all got spotless, an' when I axed 'im whut part uv de chicken he'd have, sed he'd have de gizzard kase it made 'im pritty! I gin him de gizzard —dats all I done—de Lawd done de res', fur jes' at dat minit de mule wus bohn—eny way he choked to de'f, an' dis piece uv good luck cum mighty partnership-lak wid de mule jes' to be er axerdint. No, de Lawd give and de Lawd tuck, an' dat makes it unanermous, an' we'll let it go at dat. Dinah fixed up dis notice an' it means dar'll be refreshments at de grave an' she'll shaperine de crowd. Now, ain't all dat er good 'nuff start fur one day?"

I had to admit that it was.

He was silent a while, and then:

"Wall, whut's happened in town?"

"Nothing," I said.

"O, no—dat don't do—sumpin' wus bleezter happen dar las' night."

"Oh!" I said, "I believe the people did say the Spaniards blew up our battleship, the *Maine.*"

"Didn't I tell you so?" he shouted. "The Spaniards blew up our mane—watch us blow up dey tails, an' dat's whut I's bin pin'in' fur—*war!*"

"But somebody said war is hell," I said, seriously.

"Yas, sah," winked the old man—"hell on fools an' mules, an' we's got bofe uv 'em to spare in dis

country," and he ambled off to give the mascot a half pint of pure cream.

The old man was right. From that day the tide changed. Among the many things which happened that year and which he told me were due to the especial influence of the little starlit streak of good luck, were the following:

1. The death of a book agent at the farm gate by lightning in July. He was coming to collect his monthly payment on the World's Great Orations, to which, in an hour of generosity, the old man had treated himself (*so that they might all be read at his funeral, he said*) and had regretted it every month since.

2. Smallpox—a deputy sheriff that had levied on his cow in January was down with it.

3. Dinah—lost her voice from a bad cold in August, and had not been able to talk since!

4. Wheat crop—out of sight.

5. Corn and oats—ditto!

6. Cat fish—a ten pound one caught by the old man in Bigby Creek.

7. A thunder-storm in July which rained frogs in car-load lots. The old man said he plowed them under the next day and expected a crop of frog legs the rest of his life.

I tell it as he told it to me. But I know that my own good luck followed thick and fast. Everything I touched turned to the good. The poems and stories I had been giving the country papers for ten years, being paid by them in puffs and old papers, came back no more from the magazines, but checks came instead.

Three publishers clamored for my next book. And the festive bill-shovers, deciding about that time that I was hopeless, gave up their job on back debts and let me rest.

But strangest of all good-luck—and best of all! The next mail after the birth of that mule I received a little note which I still keep in the family Bible:

I did not love you, Dr. Fell.
The reason why I could not tell.
But this I know and know full well—
I love you now, dear Dr. Fell.

THE GHOST THAT SAVED THREE FLUSHES

IT had been raining all day that Christmas week and toward night it settled into a steady pour, with a cold, sudden wind which now and then beat shiveringly the drops against the window. Hard writing all day begins to tell on one toward night—not physically, so much as mentally; for mental creation calls for a flow of nervous force that leaves the mind limp and often hysteric.

It is different from all other work in the world. It is a wonder the asylums are not filled with poets and novelists.

Surely for the work they do, the world might stand the whims and caprices of those who create.

This work continued, pays you back for over-straining nature, in two ways: First, blues; second, more blues.

When these reach the stage that you begin to doubt everything, even that you live again, you must quit. If you are wise you will go out in the field with the gun. Then you will come home tired and hungry. A hot bath and a good supper fixes you about right. You are now ready to sleep ten hours straight, and wake up the next morning with dreams in your brain and a glad heart in a good world.

But a man can't go out when it's raining—a raw, cold, December flower-killer.

What possessed Uncle Wash to get into such a mood? Generally he was funny, but to-night—

He had sat in my library for ten minutes, studying the fire and watching the steam rise up from his damp clothes. He had come over to tell me that somebody had read Booker Washington's new book to him and that Booker was a smart nigger with a long head "that wus liable to be sp'iled. An' er nigger is easier sp'iled than fresh fish in summer time," he said.

"Now you kin allers tell er new fangled nigger," he went on while I hunted for a cigar; "he don't b'leeve in ghosts. All ole niggers do."

"You surely have more sense than that," I remarked.

"I may not have eny sense," said the old man quickly. "Hit's when my eyes sees er thing I's got sense nuff to know what I sees."

"And you have seen a ghost?" I asked, half banteringly.

The next instant I was sorry. The old man had closed up like a clam.

"I'll not believe it now unless you tell me," I said after a while: "and I'd hate to think you'd begun to tell untruthful yarns in your old age.

That was enough. The old man was on his mettle.

"When my young marster wus married, ole marster give me to him. That wus Marse George Young. I heard tell dey wus sumpin' sorten wrong wid dat marriage, but I never seed no signs uv it myse'f befo' nor arter. Marse George wus mighty nigh crazy erbout er nurr' gal—I knowed dat—kase him and me uster go over dar twice er week fur to see her, an' whut Marse George done in de parlor I done in de kitchen. O, we sho' gin em er run for our money! I wus soon

engaged to erbout ha'f uv de yaller gals on dat plantashun, an' Marse George wus holdin his own wid de young mistis. She wus er powerful gal, spirited an' all dat, an han'sum es er picter; but she wus wild, an' reckless an' fond uv men dat flattered her.

"But jes' fo' dey wus to be married dey fell out erbout sumpin' an she married er rich murchant dat had er bushy head an' wo' sideburn whiskers. He didn't keer much fur her—too busy makin' money. Jes' wanted er han'sum wife.

"I sho' wus sorry fur her. She wus er fine gal an' orter had er square deal. But I knowed den she wus weak as water.

"Uv course de pesky little yaller gals all potted me, too, but I hearn arterwards dat dey hilt er meetin' on it an' 'sided ef dey didn't break dey engagement I wus gwine to break all dey ribs!

"O, I wus pritty sivigerus in dem days, boss, wid my right arm. It's de only correct instrument for cotin' wid.

"Dar wus er mighty sweet an pritty gal livin' near, dat Marse George had been gwine to see an' she wus crazy erbout him all de time he wus in luve wid de yudder one. Wal, suh de day Marse George got his walkin' papers he went to Miss Susie's house dat night (dat wus de yudder one), an' called on her. Now Marse George orter be ershamed uv hisself, for he luved dat other one, an' ef he hadn't been so reckless, dey'd er-made up and married. But he wus reckless, allers wus—an' de little 'oman wus sho' pritty an' sweet an' would er made him er better wife dan de high flyin' one.

"Susie,' say Marse George, arter er while, 'don't you think it's erbout time we wus marryin'?" She turned red an' den white—for she loved him so—an' den she cried er little an' didn't say nuffin' till Marse George kissed her an' sed:

" 'Nex' week, little 'oman—nex' week. I's tired uv all de shams of life an' I wanter to settle down.'

"An' dey did.

"Now Marse George he had won er fine farm at er game uv cards. It wus 500 acres uv es good land es I ever plowed over. He called it Three Flushes, so you know how he won it. Dar wus three in de game—Cap'in Jones an' Judge Peters—an' dey played three nights straight without sleep. Dey started wid dollar antes an' went on up to mules, niggers, cotton an' land. I allers thort Marse George wud win, kase he tuk coffee ever'time de yuthers tuk whisky. He kep' cool while dey kep' hot, an' er cool brain is er poker brain.

"He b'ilt 'im er neat little home dar, not er fine home lak ole marster's, but it wus comf'teble an' cozy, an' dar he tuk Miss Susie an' his niggers an' horses an' stock.

"I thort sho' dey'd be happy; but sumpin' wus wrong from the fus'. Miss Susie wus sweet as she cud be, an' so quiet an' good, but I seed she wus eatin' her heart out; for Marse George, try as he cud, cudn't git over pinin' fur de other one. Nobody ever heard him say er word, an' he give Miss Susie ever thing she wanted 'cept de love she wanted most uv all. Now dey ain't but two things in life dat's wurth while—one's wuck and de other is love; wid arry one uv 'em shut out, it's just er ha'f life at de most.

"I fus' noticed it in Marse George. He tuk to drinkin' whisky instead uv coffee an' he played reckless and run wid wild men. Dis nearly broke Miss Susie's heart. But befo' she died—for she died the second year—I seed her in her room settin' in er chair weepin' an' combin' out her long, beautiful hair.

"Dat de plaines' time I ever seed her, an' after she wus dead I seem to 'member her dat way.

"She never crossed Marse George nor nagged him, nor complained, an' she wus sick er long time wid fever. But befo' she died she called him to her, an' wid tears in her eyes an' in his'n too, he promised her he'd never drink nor gamble. Den she look lak she wus happier den she ever wus. Marse George, too, looked lak he jus' begin to luve her good.

"He wus holdin' her in his arms when she died.

"It all had er pow'ful effec' on Marse George—an fur er year he quit drinkin'. He give his houn's away an' sold his race horse. I never seed er man es quiet an' miserable as he wus.

"But one Christmas I notices he wus brighter. His ole self came erg'in. I soon seed what it wus. I seed him readin' er note from de murchant's wife. I watched him mighty close for de nex few days, for I didn't like dat kind er foolishness, an' I knowed Marse George wus in danger uv ruin ef dat kind uv thing started. I soon had all de worry I wanted. She met Marse George dat night, es gay an' spirited an' es fond uv him es ever. She met him at er fox hunt wid er crowd uv people—all but her husban'—he wus too busy to think of her—an' she an' Marse George got lost frum

de crowd, but turned up two hours afterwards. An' de horses didn't look lak dey'd been doin' any runnin'. An' when we got home dat night Marse George wus drinkin'. It mighty nigh killed me to see him throw hisse'f erway.

"He wus gay eser boy when I tuck de horses, an' he said:

" 'Wash, we've had er great run to-night. I begin to feel like myse'f er'gin.'

" 'Marse George,' say I, 'I hopes you will pardon me if I overstep de bounds uv yo' sarvent, but ain't you playin' wid fiah, Marse George'?

" 'Hold yo tongue, an' tend to yo' own bisness,' say he. 'Don't yo' ever give me eny advise erg'in.'

" 'It beca'se I wus thinkin' uv Miss Susie, Marse George,' seys I.

"He turned an' walked in.

"Wal sah, dar wus more balls, an' parties, an' meetin's uv all kinds. Ever whur I turned dat 'oman 'ud bob up gay an' happy, an' headed fur Marse George. She'd drive by our place an' talk to him for hours in de hammock under de trees. She danced wid him at de balls, she hunted wid him an' lived wid him till ever' body 'cept her husban' seed dey wus in love wid each other. He jes' kept on sellin' cotton an' sich, an' settin' up to his books instead uv his wife.

"De hold she had on Marse George wus lak Delilah. He drunk more, talked more an' got more recklesser. He gin er stag party, an' de men all gambled at cards. Dey played all night, an' only two uv 'em wus sober enuff to come to de breakfas' table; an' Marse George warn't one uv 'em!

"It sho' nearly brake my heart, but I tuck keer of ever thing an' pushed de farmin', an' made de crap es big es ever.

"It wus late one evenin' when I wus cuttin' hay in de river meadow. De sun wus set an' twilight wus gatherin' over de hills. I made de han's shoulder up dere sythes an' start to de cabin. I tuck er nigh cut to get to de barn quicker an' de res', fur I had all de feedin' to do. I stopped in de orcha'd by de spring house to git er drink uv water, fur I wus thirsty, fur it had been er hot day in de hay field. I wus down under de bluff by de spring when I heerd voices fur above me under de June apple tree—fur de apples wus ripe. I heard er saddle horse stompin' nigh, an' I looked an' seed er lady's saddle mare hitched nigh. I didn't intend to hear hit, but I heard Marse George say:

" 'You were mine at fust—mine, I tell you befo' you wus ever his.'

"I heerd her sorter sigh, an' dey wus silent.

" 'You don't deserve me—the way you acted, fur you knowed I luved you then as I do now,' she said after while.

"I heard Marse George kiss her.

" 'To-night,' he say, 'I's gwiner to claim you. We'll go away—you an' me—don't ker whut de wurl', yu'r husban' or de devil say. You are mine—mine!

"I saw him take her in his arms an' dey stood, her head on his shoulder. I heurd 'em make arrangements to run off dat night. Dey wus to take de kerrige at

two o'clock, he wus to drive to her home. After dat he say, 'We'll travel er year in er furrin country; by dat time he'll have er divorce fur he don't love you eny way, nor you—you don't love him?

"'No, no, darlin',' she said, 'I love only you.'

"I slipped out to de barn. I wus shakin' all over. 'Good God,' say I, 'Marse George is ruined!'

"I never wus so miser'ble in my life. I seed her ride off in de twilight, an' den Marse George come to de barn sorter hummin' er ole love song.

"'Wash,' say he, 'I'se gwinter have Captain Jones an' Judge Peters to supper to-night. You stay up an' have de kerrige ready. I may wanter go off on er little trip.'

"Den he tole me whut to do whilst he wus gone, an' how to plant ever field. I listened to him an' I didn't sey er thing, but my heart wus nigh brakin', fur I luved Marse George an' I knowed he had er great big heart, ef he wus reckless.

"An' dat sot me to thinkin' uv po' little dead Miss Susie. For I loved her best uv all. It wus nearly night when I went into de setting room to carry in de fresh water. The lamp wus turned low, an' de room was shadowy in de pale light. All wus still, an' I passes Miss Susie's chair, where she allers set. I seemed to miss her mo' an' mo'. I had put de water down an' wus turnin' to go out, when I felt lak somebody wus in de room besides myself. I had hearn no foot-steps, but I jes' felt dar wus anurr presence dar besides me. I looked aroun' fur er minute. I didn't know w'ether I wus livin' or dead. Creepin' chills

run up my back an' de blud jes' froze in my heart, fur dar sot Miss Susie in her chair, combing her long hair jes' lak she uster do befo' she died. De lamp blazed up an' lit up de room, an es de light flashed out it lit up her face an' eyes wid er gleam dat showed de tears dar, jes' es I seed her cry befo'. She never looked at me, but looked erway off, an' she wus es nachul es er livin' picture. I tried to move, but seemed to be froze to de 'arth.

" 'Miss Susie, O, Miss Susie,' I cried, an' when I looked ag'in she wus gone.

"When I got so I cud walk, I started out an' met Marse George in de hall. I lackter run over him, es I wus shakin' wid er chill.

" 'Whut's de matter with you?' he say, sorter sharp lak.

" 'Marse George,' I sed, 'Marse George, I jes' seed Miss Susie in dar as nachul es life'—but I cudn't sey no mo'— I sot down on the flo' in er dead fit. I heard him call de house gal for to bring de brandy an' he give it to me stiff.

" 'Take dat,' sez he, 'Wash, your nerves is out uv fix, an' you is de victim uv er hallucinashun,' seys he. 'You ain't seen eny thing in dat room.'

"But I cud see he wus puzzled an' worried.

"I got up an' went out. I didn't b'leeve my own senses. I felt cold an' light erbout my head. I'd never b'leeved in sich things, an' de mo' Marse George talked to me de lesser I b'leeved I'd seed it.

"Sides, de brandy doped me, an' it's er pow'ful good thing ter make er man see things es dey ain't.

"I jes' tole myse'f I'd had er light-headed spell an' seed things dat warn't dar.

"Arter er while de Capt'in an' de Judge come in, de house wus lit up, an' er good supper served. Supper over, I brought out de whisky an' de ole fashion loaf sugar, big es er cake, an' de gentlemen went to drinkin' an' playin'.

"Marse George wus reckless an' bet nigger after nigger. Sometimes he lost an' den he won. But luck sot in ag'in him an' he lost ever time. He put up de cotton an hit went.

"I sot behind him watchin' de game. Dey had played on till nigh midnight. Marse George had tole dem dat at midnight he wud quit, es he had er engagement later. De pot had growed to be er big thing. Capt'n Jones he had up ten thousand in warehouse receets, an' Judge he had up de coin in big rolls. Marse George had lost steady, an' he say, 'Gemmen, I'll put up de farm in dat pot, Ef I lose it's alright, for I don't mind telling you gemmen dat I's going erway for er year, to-night, maybe I'll come back—maybe I'll never come.'

" 'Marse George I say, 'don't—for Gawd's sake don't put up de farm.'

"He turned on me an' cussed me. I slipped down behind his chair, my face in my hands, fur I felt lak he wus lost.

" 'Will you take de farm in at twenty thousand dollars?' he say. 'Ef so, I'll now play you to er stand-still.'

"De Judge nodded an' shuffled an' delt de cards.

"De light begun to burn low. Den I smelt in dat room dat cur'is smell erg'in es frum de dead—jes' es I smelt dat evenin'; an' I felt de same feelin' lak somebody wus in de room. I wus feared to look up. I seed Marse George an' de others reach out to take up de cards an' I knowed on dat han' hung me an dat fine farm.

"But Marse George never touched his, fur dar in dat same chair sot Miss Susie combin' her hair, an' de lamp lighted up her eyes an' de tears wus dar.

"I grabbed Marse George shoulder and p'inted.

"He gins one look an' I seed the blood freeze in his face. His hand re'ching out for de cards jes' lay still an' par'lyzed.

" 'What in de hell, Young, is de matter wid you?' sed the Judge, lookin' at 'em plumb 'stounded.

"Den de both turned an' looked wher' dey seed Marse George lookin'.

"But dey didn't seem to understan', an' both uv 'em riz quick frum dey seats, an' de Judge bowed an' sez:

" 'Pardon me, madam, I didn't kno' dar wus er lady in de house.'

"Marse George had fell back in his chair.

"An' den Miss Susie riz up an' walked towards de door, an' at de door she turned an' looked at Marse George for er second so sad it melted my heart.

"Wid dat she vanished an' yit de door was still shet.

"Not er man spoke er word nor moved for er moment. I seed de Judge rub his forehead lak he wondering ef he dreamed, an' de Capt'in stood pale an' shakin', reachin' for de whisky. At las' de Judge sed:

" 'My God, Young, who was that woman an' where did she go to?'

" 'That,' sez Marse George, 'wus my wife—she died er year ago.'

"He riz up so shaky—I had to hold him. 'Gemmen, shall we finish the game? I fear I am going to faint.'

" 'Wash,' he says, when he seed de other two lookin' fur dey hats, 'bring 'round the kerrige an' shut up this house.' Gemmen, we will ride. I am goin' out West wid this boy an' take er hunt. I've been all kinds uv er fool an' er madman, er reprobate an' er breaker uv solemn vows to er dying wife, But I'm sane erg'in.'

"He wus, an' de yudder 'oman never seed 'im ergin. He died on de firin' line at Shiloh, sah, leadin' his regiment."

THE ORIGIN OF THE COON

"ONE year ole Marster went up to Philadelphy, whar er ship load uv niggers had been shipped in, an' focht back er half dozen likely bucks an' wenches fresh frum Afiker. We had to do this ever now an' then because de lan' wus cleared so much faster dan we cud till it an' ole Marster wus allers buyin' mo' lan' than we cud raise niggers to till it. Now there is sev'ral little pints about er nigger fresh frum Afiker dat you hafter watch, chief uv which is his smell. Fur ten years or mo' dese pints sticks an' often ain't bred outen dem untwell de nex' jinerashun. One wus to keep 'em outen hoo-doo tricks an' wash 'em in de creek at least once er month; de other wus to get 'em to eat cooked vittles, an' de las' wus to sew up dey clothes on 'em so dey cudn't git out when the sun shone hot. I's seen hundreds an' hundreds uv 'em in my life, lived on de same place wid 'em, an' dese have allers been de pints I's noticed it wus de hardes' to break 'em in for de fus' lesson uv civerlizashun.

"And it wus er hard thing to get 'em to do it. Ever' one fetched his little gawds erlong wid him. Dese little gawds wus little stick men—wal, you cudn't call 'em much mor'n sticks, wid heads cyarved on 'em an' wore slick an' greasy frum bein' handed down for hundreds uv years from one nigger to er nurr.

"I called dese little things *Jacks*. I thort that 'ud suit 'em as well as enything.

"An' ever nigger had his *Jack*, which he worshipped, and which he thort told him everthing dat 'ud come to pass.

"An' don't you think dey wan't foolish 'bout dem little *Jacks!*

"I wus overseer fur ole Marster an' had charge uv all them Afiker niggers an' I cum mighty nigh losin' my life onct by gittin' between one uv dem big, fierce savage niggers an' his r'ligun, which wus his *Jack*. This nigger used to git his *Jack* up ever mornin' bright an' early, an' sich prayin' an' carryin' on wid dat *Jack* you never seed. Dis nigger wus named Skibo, an' he'd rastle wid his *Jack* in prayer mornin', noon an' night. He sed *Jack* kep him frum all harm, dat he kep snakes frum bitin' him in de new groun', an' fevers frum ketchin' him in de swamp, an' ghostes frum chasin' him at night, an' er blue-gum nigger cudn't pizen him ef he bit him ef he made *Jack* tech de spot. An' *Jack* even told him if his wife wus faithful or not, which es they generally wan't, shows whut er fool eny nigger is dat ever thinks he needs er *Jack* on dat pint!

"Wal, as I sed, dis *Jack* told Skibo everthing 'cept how to bathe onct er month, how to keep his shirt on widout tackin' it to his years an' how to wuck in de cotton an' cohn fiel'.

"An' dem wus de things I wanted *Jack* to post him on most pintedly.

"When the sun 'ud git hot Skibo 'ud throw off turrible. I'd find him ever time my back wus turned havin' er bad case uv riligun in eny shady place he cu'd pull out his *Jack*, fur he allers carried de thing

tied up in er eel skin round his neck. So one day when I caught him for de thud time in one mornin' gwine into er conference wid *Jack* es to whether his wife wus thinkin' uv him dat minute or er nurr nigger dat hader conjure made up uv er turkledove's egg an' er frog's foot an' put hit under his do' step to wean erway his wife's 'flectuns, I gin him er kick in his prayin' end, snatched his *Jack* frum round his neck an' flung de thing into de creek.

"Den I seed whut er mistake I'd made to try to get between er fool an' his r'ligun! He come at me lak er gorilla uv de woods. an' de only thing dat saved my life wus dat de staff uv my bull whip loaded wid nigh er pound uv lead wus er little further in de reach dan his arm wid er knife in it. Befo' he come to I shackled his right arm to his leg, went into de creek, got de leetle ole thing an' put it on his breast.

"When he came to an' seed it you cud 'a heard him laughing a mile. He thort *Jack* had come out uv de creek an' saved his life!

"After dat I seed I had to kill him ef I separated him from his r'ligun, an' es he cost ole Marster five hundred dollars, I done de bes' I cu'd.

"Wal, dat nigger kep on till he got de whole plantashun, even ole Marster, to bleevin' in his *Jack*. He had *Jack* perdictin' two or three things dat sho did come to pass. He sed er month erhead dat ole Shobo, de witch nigger, 'ud die on er certain day; an' on dat day ole Shobo laid down an' died! I allers thort he wus skeered to death, but it sho' fixed Jack es er proffit ermong de niggers.

"The nex' shot he made wus dat in the spring of '42 dar wus gwinter be er killin' frost de last week in May an' so hep me Gawd ef it didn't come an' killed cotton hoe high an' corn up to yo' knees. Dat made me so mad that I begged Marster to let me sick de blood hounds on him an' run him into the swamp. But he wudn't—ole Marster wus beginnin' to bleeve in him hisself. Dar is superstishun in ever man dat ever lived an' dat fool savage an' his *Jack* wus beginnin' to tech ole Marster's.

"One mornin' he come to old Marster in er turrible hurry an' told him he jes had to speak to him. By dat he cud talk sorter like sumpin nurr, an' he got down on his knees and begged ole Marser to move outen de little office he slept in nigh de big house befo' night. Ole Marster laughed at him an' tole him to go to wuck. He went beggin' an' then I gin him er lickin' fur not wuckin', but he run back to de house an' got on his knees er'gin an' begged ole Marster not to sleep in de little room dat night, dat *Jack* told him sumpin turrible gwinter happen ef he did. Ole Marster tried to kick him away, but he hung on to ole Marster's han' kissin' it an' beggin' till ole Marster promised.

"Dat wus de night uv de big cyclone dat struck de little office fust and swept it erway an' fo' nigger cabins, killin' three niggers. Ole Marster wus reddy then to swar' by him.

"Then he played er trick on ole Marster. One night he stole ole Marster's saddle hoss out an' hid him in de woods. De nex' day we scoured de country hoss-back an' erfoot, but no hoss.

"Marster called on Skibo an' Skibo set up his *Jack*. Fust he went into er trance—*Jack* wouldn't talk to him less he wus in er trance, an' when he wakes he goes straight to de swamp where he hid de hoss and rides home.

"By dis time it had gone all over de country, an' Marster sed he'd bet his farm he had er *hoodoo* nigger dat could tell anything. He wouldn't let Skibo wuck at all; he fed him on de fat uv de land, and let him marry er wife on ever plantashun erroun' dar an' he even tuck Ole Pitt's young wife erway frum him an' gin her to dat Skibo.

"An' de more ole Marster drunk the mo' he bragged on Skibo.

"De fust thing I knowed (I heurd it frum nigger mouth) ole Marster and Majah Sellers, his nabur, had made er big bet. Hit wus the talk of the county. Ole Marster bet ten uv his niggers an' er thousan' dollars erg'in de same uv Majah Sellers dat de Majah cud put up enything, sight-under-seen, enywhar, day or night, an' Skibo would tell whut it wus. De Majah tuck it up an' Sat'day nex' afternoon wus to be de test, it bein' er half holiday fur us all.

"Wal, de whole county turned out an' dat Sat'day we went in er body over to Majah Sellers, ole Marster ridin' in frunt wid Skibo an' his *Jack*.

"De yard uv Majah Sellers wus full uv naburs an' niggers an' we wus all drawed up in er line an' de ten niggers on each side put up in er bunch an' de money in de stakeholder's hands.

"I looked an' I seed nothin' in de open place whar

de test wus to be made but er big iron pot turned over, an' den I larned dat de thing dat Skibo wus to tell uv wus under dat pot, an' he had jes one guess at it.

"Majah Sellers wus laughin' an' mighty pleased at de chance uv winnin' ten niggers an' er thousan' dollars, an' Marster jes stalked erroun' an' swore he already had de Majah's niggers an' money. When de hour come an' everything wus ready an' everbody was dar, Marster walked to de open place wid Major Sellers an' de stakeholder who wus de referee, an' sed:

" 'Come, Skibo, git down on de groun', and rastle wid yo' *Jack* an' tell us what's under dat pot.'

"Skibo got down, but I don't know why it wus, he cudn't go into his trance. Some sed de big crowd frustrated him; some sed *Jack* wouldn't wuck on er ungodly bet, and some sed de skill had left Skibo. Anyway, he sot an' foamed at de mouth an' beat his breast an' set *Jack* up befo' an' behind an' sideways an' on his back an' on his belly, but it wus no go, an' Marster cud see it plainer than enybody.

"Five minutes—ten minutes—er half hour passed, an' still Skibo foamed an' beat his breast an' looked like er whipped dog, an' Marster stood pale an' worried.

" 'Come,' sed de referee, 'time's up; *what's under dat pot, nigger*.'"

"An' den Skibo 'beat at his game an' wantin' to die, fell on his knees befo' de man, raised his han's to heaben, put his mouth in de dust an' sed:

" '*Buckra—Buckra—you done got de ole coon at last!*'

"Majah Sellers turned pale. His laugh died on his face as he turned to ole Marster and sed:

" '*By Gawd, he is right—it's er coon we caught and put under dat pot last night. Take de niggers an' de money.*'

"De referee lifted de pot and out come Mister Coon. We raised er shout and carried Skibo back home on our shoulders.

"An' frum dat day dey have called all black niggers coons."

THE NERVOUS GOATS*

"I NEVER had much use fur goats," said Uncle Wash the other night, "an I got less use fur 'em now dan ever. Dey may be es good to eat es sheep to some people, but when I hears er man say dat, ef he's white, I looks fur his head to be all cymling and his feets all giblets, an' ef he's black I looks fur blue gums an' wropped hair. Ever' now an' den, dey gits up er goat craze in de South an' dese city men whut edits farm papers in cities tells whut er pow'ful lot uv money dey is in goats. After tellin' how dey eats up ever'-thing nuthin' else will tetch—not even barrin' er carryon cro'—an' can live an' prosper on er dry spot so nigh de wicked place dat nuthin' else cu'd live dere wid col' feet unless dey walked on stilts, dey den pro-ceeds to tell how fast dey can prop-er-gait, which is er big word dey uses to tell how soon an' nachully er little sissy kid goat gits to be er nanny.

"It ain't often I drops into poetry, but heah is de way I figures it out:

Two little goatses, out in de sno'
Dey gits married an' den dar is fo'.
Fo' little goatses longin' to mate,
Bare is de larder, but soon dar is eight.

*When this story was published in a magazine it brought many letters asking if there were, in fact, such goats as described by Old Wash. The story is true and these peculiar goats, called Nervous Goats, are well known in middle Tennessee. They have been the subject of much scientific investigation. This incident happened to the flock owned by Mr. Walter Parmer, Nashville, Tennessee.

Eight little goatses, weeds, an' no mo'—
Weeds is for true love an' now twenty-fo'.
Twenty-fo' goatses climbin' de gate,
Ever'whar dey oughtn't be—now eighty-eight.
Eighty-eight goatses, all in de corn,
Still studyin' 'rithmetic—two hundred's born.
Two hundred goatses on house top an' tree—
Dey drops six hundred by de rule uv three!
Six hundred goatses, locustin' de land,
Living on lizard, love-knots an' sand,
But sand is deir manna—dey marry ag'in,
Now sixteen million, nine hundred an' ten!

"Did you urver notice, Marse John, de turrible hard slam de Bible gives de goatses? An' when de Good Book tags er thing it's dar fur all eternity an' warranted not to fade. Uv all de animules in de ark, snakes an' goatses is de only things dat is under de ban. You know whut de snake done—tempted Eve, an' de rest uv us been stayin' in after skule ever sense an' takin' our spankin'. But de way it throwed off on de goatses wus wussur still, fur it laid ever' low-down white-livered thing dat happened on de goatses. Whenever er ole Jew had done sumpin' specially low down an' wanted to lie out uv it hisse'f, he'd rub asserfeterty an' gypsy juice on some goat an' start him th'oo de wilderness. Dey call him er scapegoat because dey thought he orter be thankful to 'scape wid his life, seein' he kerried so many other fo'kses sins on his back.

"Oh, you kin jes' bet er man gits whut he sows in dis worl'.

"Ole Abraham started de thing an' all de others kep' it up an' all th'oo de Good Book de sins uv de world is laid on goatses. Dey even studied it out fur de Jedgment day when dar'll be er big separashun uv de sheep an' de goatses, an' all sinners will be turned into goatses. Dis allers struck me es correct, fur dere is jes' erbout dat much difference 'twixt er game, ole, naughty, bad-smellin' sinner an' er weak, no'count, sissy, *bah-bah*, goody-goody!

"An' it's all in favor uv de goat!

"Es fur me, give me er goat over er sheep ever' time. Er goat smells bad to some fo'ks, but he'll hustle fur his own, is dead game, don't complain, 'tends to his own business, ain't stuck up an' is er pow'ful ladies' man. You nurver heah uv er goat-killin' dog—no, sah, but I's seed er many er dog-killin' goat. An' de best way to save er flock uv cowardly sheeps is to put er few billies in ermongst 'em. But er sheep—de thing we Christyuns is picked out es emblem uv all dat's good an' holy, Marse John, it's er shame! He's er meek-faced, flop-yeared fool, so silly he'll jump into er bottomless pit ef his nigh neighbor happen to fall in, an' so cowardly any yaller cur can chase an' kill de whole flock. Whilst his big horns an' stiff neck is puttin' up er bold game uv bluff, his slinkin' limber tail, floppin' betwixt his legs, is doin' all it can to lie out uv it! Dey ain't got sense enuff to keep er crow offen deir babes when born, dey hunts fur all de soft spots in de pasture an' dey quits to anything dat gits er good holt on dey wool. Don't put up no lamb on my tomb when I's gone, Marse John. Ef I's got to be pictured an' disgraced

es er animule an' er nachur faker after I's dead an' it's er ch'ice 'twixt de goat an' de sheep, carve fur Uncle Wash er game ole goat, wise unto salvershun, keepin' his own council, speakin' no evil, stickin' to de middle uv de road—er good ole prop-er-gaitin' populite, whiskers an' all!

"Yassah!

"But I started out to tell erbout dem nervus goatses. I lives down nigh Marse Walter, an' he's got er flock uv dem goats, dat run in de pasture wid de fine mares. You know brood mares nurver git sick ef er goat stays ermong 'em, fur de smell uv de goat is so servigrus, dat whenever er microbe uv eny breed gits er good whiff uv it, he des' gasps an' smiles an' dies, as de poet sez uv de hero soljer. An' so Marse Walter he keeps dem goats wid his mares, an' do' he 'low us to go th'oo eny other part uv de farm, he don't 'low nobody to make er common passway th'oo de paddock. But de other Sunday es I went to preachin' I wus late, an' thinkin' he wouldn't keer dis time I tuck er short cut th'oo de paddock. I seed de flock uv goats an' de mares an' colts but I wuz so busy wuckin' out my sermon, de tex' of which was, '*And he separated de sheep frum de goats*,' dat I run over er kid 'sleep in de grass befo' I seed it. '*Bah-bah*,' sez de kid, jumpin' up so sudden 'twixt my legs dat I jumped two feet offen de groun'. Den I gin him er kick when I hit de yearth, clap my hands to make him run an' sed, '*Bah-bah, yo'se'f*!'

"Wid dat ever' goat dar started to run, but jes' hollered *bah-bah* an' drapped dead!

"An' when I seed whut I'd done I mighty nigh done it myse'f.

"I started on er run fur de fence, but looked back an' de groun' wus jes' kivered wid goats kickin' an' stiffenin' out an' dyin'. I 'spected to see de mares an' colts tumble nex' so I makes er break over de fence an' over de hills back home.

"No mo' sermon fur me dat day. I'd seed all I wanted to see erbout goatses, unless it wus how to raise 'em frum de dead.

"I kep' hid out all day, wonderin' ef enybody seed me. All night I dreamed uv goats—dreamed it wus de last great day, dat Marse Walter wus de great Judge, an' when my time come I wus cast over among de goatses.

"Sho' nuff, at breakfus' heah cum de sheriff, an' reads me er writ an' takes me to de jestice cou't.

"I nurver had been 'rested befo'. I wus scand'lized an' ruined, all by er lot uv goatses. I axed 'em to let me see you, dat you'd go on my bond, but dey drug me befo' de squire.

"You nurver seed sich er trial; ever'body wus dar, an' de trouble I wus in seem to give gener'l satisfacshun. De Majah he spoke ag'in' me, tellin' de jestice dat I went into de paddock an' kilt de whole flock uv goatses. *'He wus so tarnal ugly dey all drapt dead at sight uv him,' he say.* He kep' dat an' some mo' up fur er hour, an' he had de whole cou'thouse, judge an' all, er-laffin' at me. I nurver seed fo'ks have so much fun an' I nurver felt so mean an' low down. De Majah 'splains it wus er flock uv ve'y unusual goatses,

called Nervous Goats, an' dat dey wus wuth er hundred dollars erpiece, an' he figured out dat I owed Marse Walter des' five thousand, six hundred dollars an' de state pen two years hard labor fur trespass!

"Wid dat I jes' give up. I'd figured dat ef it cum to de wuss dey wus wuth 'bout two dollars each an' I knowed I cu'd sell de filly an' pay dat. But dis jes' ruint me. I wanted to die. I wus willin' fur to sell all I had an' pay up, but de Judge sed I'd hafter make er speech an' 'splain how it wus or he'd hafter gin jedgment fur de amount an' hang me afterwards. Hit looked lak dey wus gwine to make it es miser'bul fur me as dey cud so I done de bes' I cud wid er heavy h'art.

" 'Marse Judge an' Gen'lm'n,' sez I. 'I's er ole nigger, dat has lived er godly life gwine in an' comin' out befo' you, an' nurver got into no trouble befo' till I got tangled up wid dat ar lot uv goatses in de paddock an' I think dis wus de same breed dat will be on de Lord's lef' han' at de jedgment morn. Dey's I na'chully de chillun uv darkness an' dis heah wus er put-up job on me fur to make me furgit my sermon an' do de devil er good turn. Gen'l'm'n, when dem goatses all drapped dead on me, don't you kno' I wus des' es skeered es dey wus, an' de only reason I didn't drap too wus because I didn't stop runnin' long enuff? I wus in de same fix dat Marse Jack Reeves, uv Hardman County, wus when he got drunk, missed his train an' wus put in de same bed by de landlord wid er dead man dat had been laid out in de hotel. 'Bout two o'clock he got sober enuff an' thirsty enuff to take notice an' he heerd two young fo'ks talkin' sweet in de

room an' de young man wus tryin' to kiss de gal. But she said, *'George, you mus'n't try to kiss me whilst we're sittin' up wid er corpse,'* an' den Marse Jack puts out his han' an' feels to see who he is sleepin' wid an' de face he teches wus marble! He wus in his night clothes an' it wus er race 'twixt him an' de young fo'ks es to which 'ud git to de open air fust. But he 'lowed in de piece he writ erbout it, dat he wus des' es bad skeered as dey wus. Now dat's de way it wus wid me an' de goatses, gen'l'm'n, an' I think I got skeer enuff widout bein' fined an' saunt up.'

"Dis seem to tickle 'em mighty, an' de judge said dat defo' he would decide he thort it jes' an' right fur all hands to go down to Marse Walter's farm an' see jes' how many goatses I *did* kill.

"Dis kerried, an' de sheriff handcuffed me an' dey all tuck me down to dar, an' I felt 'bout de sheep-killines' dog dat ever wus. I seed 'em all winkin' an' laughin' es dey went erlong, an' me er-beggin' 'em to let me go off an' die. We went to de paddock an' dar wus anurr flock of goatses, 'zact'ly lak de ones I'd kilt. I looked at 'em 'stounded lak, fur I seed I'd lef' some seed goatses, an' knowin' how dey prop-er-gaits, I jes' nachully thort dey'd done all dat in two days.

" 'Dar is er new flock,' sez de sheriff. 'Now, ole man, des' sho' us des' how you did manage to kill all dem other ones.'

" 'Gen'l'm'n,' sez I, 'I wus comin' 'long right heah, er-wuckin' out my sermon, an' right heah,' sez I, 'I steps on er little goat entirely unbeknownst to me,

an' he skeers me so I jumped twenty foot in de air, comin' right back down on dat fool goat, dat didn't do nuffin' but dance up an' down, hollerin' *bah-bah*, an' tangled me up so ever' time I step he'd be dar whar I step at. "*Bah-bah*," sez he, still er-dancin' 'twixt my legs. "*Bah-bah, yo'se'f*," sez I; "*if you cyan't run, fur Gord's sake git outen de way an' lem me show you how;*" an' den, gen'l'm'n, so he'p he heab'n, I didn't do nuffin' but jes' gin er big whoop an' clap my hands like dis—.'

"I heard 'em all shout wid fun, an' I looks an' 'fore Gawd, I'd done it erg'in—ever' goat dar had drapped dead!

"I broke an' tried to run, dis time to de creek to drown myse'f.

" 'Ketch him,' sed de Majah; 'don't you see he is de ole devil hisse'f? Ketch him; he's er witch.'

"I stood par'lyzed, beggin' 'em to kill me an' den I seed one goat after anurr kick erwhile an' den git up es solemn es deacons an' go to eatin' grass es nachul es er grass widder!

"I broke in er big laugh an'shouted an'de squire sed:

" 'Resurrection morn, Wash—fust man up fur a mint julip!'

"It wus all fur fun an' dey had put it up on de ole man scan'lous, but de aftermath wus fine—er shady grove, er good barbycue uv dat very kid dat had skeered me so, watermilions an' mint julip!

"But I nurver 'spects to heah dem white fo'ks tell de las' uv it an' nachully I keeps shy uv nervous goatses an' nervous fo'ks uv all kind!"

A CONTEST IN THE KING'S ENGLISH

THERE is a young darky downtown, at a livery stable who has been priding himself on his ability, as he expressed it, "ter fling English." But he takes no pride in it any more. Uncle Wash cured him, and it happened this way:

"Whenever I goes down dar arter yo' mare," the old darky said, "dis heah young niggah gins ter fling his English 'roun' scan'lus. I tell you, boss, I's gittin' tired uv dat, an' I's gwi' teach 'im how ter talk English sho' nuff some day. I sw'ar to you, sah," said the old man, as he mopped his face with his red handkerchief, "It's so hot I's mighty nigh multerplied, an' I's got de commissary rumertism, ter boot; but jes you watch out fur me de naixt time dat nigger 'gins ter fling his jaw-bone 'roun' whar I's standin'—jes you watch me riddle 'im wid sintax an' orfrography an' sich! Jes you watch!"

For several days after that I noticed the old man studying an old Davies Geometry and an obsolete work on synonyms, which I had sent to the attic long ago—looking, as he expressed it, for "some good cuss-words to fit de 'casion." But I had forgotten all about it until one evening I drove into the stable with him. A sprightly young darky ran out, took the mare by the bit, and patronizingly remarked:

"Gentermen, condescen' to disintergrate frum de vehicle, an' de quadruped shall have my unqualified

solicertashun, wid abundance uv nutrititious ellerments." And he smirked at the old man as much as to say: "Don't dat paralyze you, old man?"

"Hold on dar," exclaimed Uncle Wash, and his eyes flashed as he rose quickly to the occasion: "Sonny," he began witheringly, "it is transparent to de interlactual apprehension uv eny disinterested individual dat de gravertashun uv special conceits described on de hypotonuse of your simeon-headed eclipse, am entirely too cumbershum fur de horizontal vinculum dat circumscribes de radius uv yo' cocoanut-shaped trapezium, sah!"

"Wha—wha—what dat you say, Unker Wash?" gasped the young darky as his jaw began to drop.

"I merely riz ter interjec' de mental reservashun," remarked the old man indifferently, "dat de interlectual hemmerage uv verbosity procedin' from de vacuum produced by de metermorphosis uv de origonal superstructure uv de san'-stones uv yo' cranium, am entirely incumpatabul wid de consterpashun uv ideas generated by de paralysis uv yo' interlectual acumen, sah!"

"Gawd, whut is he sayin'?" remarked the young negro sheepishly to the crowd that had gathered to enjoy his discomfiture.

"In udder words," shot out the old man again, "ter make hit entirely incomprehensibul to de conglommerated hypothesis uv yo' trapezoidal interlec', I simply remarked dat de corporeal superfluerty uv yo' physical insigniferkance am entirely too cumbersome fur de beliy-band uv yo' mental confermashun, sah!"

Here the crowd shouted, the young darky's eyes looked like moons, his legs shook, and he gasped out: "Wha—wha—what dat old man talkin' 'bout, man?"

"How long since dis nigger wus cotch in the jungles uv Africa," asked Uncle Wash quietly of the proprietor of the stable, "dat he can't understan' de simples' remark in de plaines' uv English?"

And then the old man tried again. He rolled up his sleeves, and with the air of one who was trying to make himself exceedingly plain he began laying it off on his fingers and palm:

"Sonny, de equilateral altertude uv de comprehenserbility uv my former observations wus to de effect dat, ef in de course uv er cummercial transacshun, I shu'd onexpectedly negotiate fur yo' habeas-corporosity at its intrinsic invalidity an' quickly dispose uv it at de exaggerated hifolutiness uv yo' own colossal conceitability an' hipnartic expectashun I'd have sufficient commercial collateral to transpose my present habitation to de perennial localization uv de avenue called Easy."

By this time the young darky was fairly groveling in the dust.

"Do yo' comprehen' dat," yelled the old man, "yo' po' benighted parallelergram, distended frum de apex uv er truncated coon (cone), yo' bow-legged son uv er parallelopipedon—"

But the old man got no further with his geometrical swearing, for amid the shouts of the spectators his opponent had vanished, and as he went up the street to have the old man arrested for swearing in public,

he remarked to the policeman as he told his tale: "I didn't keer, Cap'n, 'bout 'im outgineralin' me er flingin' English, an' outcussin' me in mo' kinder new-fangled cuss words den ever cum out uv Turkey, but when he 'flected on my mother by callin' me de bow-legged-son-uv-er-parrot-an-er-pigeon-roost, de nigger don't live dat I gwi' take dat frum!"

It was a week later before Uncle Wash and I had occasion to drive into the stable again. We were met by the same darky, who took the mare by the bit and meekly remarked: "Light, gentlemen; I'll take de mair."

And the old man said: "I am so excruciatinly rejoiced, sonny, to recognize de rejuvernated resurrection uv de exhileration' perception dat an infinertesermal ray uv common sense has penerrated de comatose condition uv yo' fibrous misunderstandin'. In other words," he winked, "I's saved an ebononic interlec frum er new-bohn grave."

HOW UNCLE WASH CONVERTED PHOSPHATE IKE

PHOSPHATE IKE was by all odds the worst negro in the Mount Pleasant phosphate fields. Three killings and ten years in the penitentiary were the decorations that made him at once the revered and honored of his kind, and after such a record the tribute he levied on all other negroes, and which they honored at sight and without protest, ran all the way from their wares to their wives. His beaten paths were from crap game to crap game and from bar-room to bar-room, varying by moonlight toward certain places where roosted things with feathers on them. This is Uncle Wash's account of how he changed the tenor Ike's ways:

"De Mount Pleasant fiel' is de toughes' in our dioseize, de niggers dar bein' all phosphate miners, allers comin' an' gwine—chiefly gwine. An' among all de thievin', drunkin' lot, Phosphate Ike, wid er razor in his hip pocket an' er durrenger in his boots, wus de wust.

"I wus 'lected arter er hard tuzzle to minister to de spir'chul contenshuns uv dat congregashun, an' I made up my mind I wus gwine do things dat 'ud be worthy uv my repertashun. So I labored in de vineyard early an' late, an' tho' I cort many er sinner in de net, I nurver cu'd ketch Ike. I helt sever'l distracted meetin's endurin' uv de yeah, thinkin' Ik'ud walk

into de trap, but he only laff' at me an' saunt me wurd I'd hafter bait dat trap wid sump'n mo' enticin' dan craw-fish gospel an' ole 'oman soup to make him give up whisky an' watermilyuns. He even had de' dacity to tell me to my face dat de wing uv one yaller laig on earth wus wurth two in heaben. Oh, he wus er scan'lus, thievin', blue-gum inferdel!

"But I laid fur 'im. I had to do it. Befo' fall my influence 'gun to wane, an' I seed it all wus because I cu'dn't trap dat nigger into de fold. De contrer-bushuns in de hat dropped es stead'ly es er ole maid's intrust in de widower preacher arter she learns he's gwine ter marry de fat gal uv de quire, an' one day when de hat cum back empty I knowed dey had los' faith in my 'bility to land dat onregenerit cuss an' his crowd, an' ef I didn't do somethin' quick dar'd be ernuther nigger passin' dat hat ever' thu'd Sunday an' eatin' fried chicken 'tween meals wid de sisterin.

"I gin out dat de bigges' distracted meetin' uv de year'd start de nex' Lawd's day, an' dat I wus gwinter rout de devil in de Mount Pleasant District or give him de fiel'.

"Befo de time come I sot my traps fur Bad Ike. He wus de head an' front uv all de crowd dat wus holdin' out ergin de Lawd. Behin' him wus forty odd devilish young niggers an' niggeresses, an' he wus de bell-wether. I had wucked er year an' didn't have nuffin' in de church but er few old sisterin dat cu'dn't do nuffin' but go to sleep endurin' de sermon an' wake up to jine de doxology, an' er few ole bretherin dat had plenty of piety but no pie. Nuffin' went in dat secshun

but er bran' dance, er crap game an' er nigger killin', led by Ike an' his set. I wus square up agin' de wust propersishun de gospel had ever hit sence de burnin' uv de saints at de stake, an' I 'cided I'd hafter go outside uv all creed an' conduct an' outside uv all prescerdent an' gospel an' ever'thing else to bring de Lawd's side ahead uv dis deciple uv de devil.

"But I done it. Necesserty am de mother uv invenshun, an' it holds jes' es good in 'lijun es it do in anything else. But I wus de daddy uv dis skeme.

"Wal, Marse John, de mo' I study it de mo' I seed I'd jes' hafter git up er new kind uv 'lijun myse'f to fit dat case. Dar wa'nt nuffin' in de Bible from Sodum an' Germorrah to de swallerin' uv Jonah dat'd fit dat nigger. Fiah on his back'd only made him git er move on hisse'f, like fiah on er turtle's back, to some other place uv devilment; an' eny whale big ernuff to swaller him wid dat razor in 'is pocket would er knowed how er operashun fur appendix felt frum de inside. De mo' I study hit de mo' I seed sump'n wus wrong wid our way uv enticin' sinners into de fold. Jes' compare de devil's way an' ourn an' see how he has got us beat er block. We sticks to de ole way, sollum es owls an' 'bout es much life in us as deir nestes, whilst de devil has er glad, new, joyous skeme to fit de requirements uv ever' candidate. He keeps up wid de fashun, whilst we wearin' de same 'lijus clo's, knee britches, powdered wig an' all dat useter fit Marse John Wesley and Martin Luther. It must er bin er good fit fur dem befo' de days uv flyin' cyars an' 'lectric lights an' airships, beca'se de only fun er man had wus

when he wus born, married or dead, or turned out uv jail fur debt an' folks natchully went to church to hear de news an' see who hadn't bin hung fur his 'lijus cunvicshuns sence de las' meetin'. Jes look at some uv de devil's skemes. He gits up er theater, full uv light an' music an' fun; we come back wid er prayer-meetin', wid de same ole long-winded bretherin sayin' de same ole prayers. He laughs an' gits up er dance whar young people can forgit deyse'fs in er little uv de joy uv living. We sees his han' an' cums back wid er Sunday-school lessin tellin' 'em all de way to have real fun is to be good an' lonesum an' let other folks kno' when dey ain't livin' right. He knows de weakness uv man an' de folly uv woman an' he gits up bar-rooms wid 'lectric lights an' purty pictures, crap games fur niggers an' poker an' bridge whist fur de whites; we cums back wid sody-watter, church teas an' games lak *tit-tat-toe* an' flinch. He gits up politics an' politercul convenshuns whar men meet, fight it out in de good ole way, raise hell, take chances lak game white men an' have er good time er die tryin'. We 'spon's wid sermons an' conf'runces an' convenshuns, whar everything is stacked an' dried, oil poured on de water befo' it gits troudled an' de fences all whitewashed befo' dey is ever put up. He changes de style uv 'is house wid ev'ry new invenshun, but allers bright an' joyous even if it ends in death, but we try to 'ntice young fo'ks into our house not wid de joy an' gladness an' cheerfulness of 'lijun, but wid de same ole preacher still harpin' on hell an' damnashun an' de same ole organ croakin:

'Hark frum de tomb er doleful soun'.

"He gits up op'rys dat make folks forgit dey livin' an' dream dreams uv beauty; an' social clubs wid fine clothes on to lif' 'em up out er deyse'fs an' away frum de wuck an' common things uv life. He tells 'em all to live an' be happy an' we tells 'em to die an' be damned.

"I knowed our 'lijun wus all right, but I seed we ain't doin' it right. Heah wus dese cattle dat I cu'dn't even git up to de paschure bars to salt 'em, let alone close ernuff to put er halter on 'em, all fur lack uv er little common sense in 'lijun. I 'cided to salt 'em, bridle 'em, saddle 'em an' ride 'em.

"I laid awake uv nights thinkin' out my plan an' one night arter much prayer de light broke. It tuk me two mo' days to git up my program an' git it stuck up on all de nigger trails from Columbia to Lawrenceburg." The old man chuckled as he pulled one out.

BIG MEETIN' AT FOSFATE CHURCH.

Come one—Come all. New thing in relijun, entertainin', enticin', upliftin'.

1. Openin' Overtorys, Moses in de Bullrushes. By de fidlers three.

2. Cake walk fur de bigges' watermilyun, widders barred. By all.

3. Short talk, My Rikellecshuns uv Hell. Br'er Timothy Jones.

(N. B. Br'er Jones is er reformed drunkard, bin in de

pen 8 times an' had five wives in one year. He speaks from authority.)

4. Guessin' contest fur de nex' big milyun. Question: Who was de father uv Zebedee's chillun?

(Preachers not obleeged to answer.)

5. Passin' de hat fur de po' uv de church. Deacon Dickey.

(Save your bes' fur de las'.)

6. Organ music, Carve dat Possum. By de quire.

7. Potater race fur peck er sweet potaters.

(Canderdates tied up in sackcloth an' ashes. Route from pulpit to pool in de creek. Winner an' water-milyun bofe baptized.

8. Soulful sermon, text, Sodom an' Germorrah an' er Pile of Salt. Br'er Washington.

9. Passin' de Hat fur de Parson. By Phosphate Ike.

The old man chuckled. "You nurver seed anything lak it—de bigges' crowd dat ever got into dat church turned out, an', bless heaben, dar sot Ike on de front bench, so proud of de 'titlement I bestowed on him, leadin' de whole gang. Now, Ike wa'n't no fool, ef he did have fits, an' when de hat was passed arter de guessin' contes', and come back heavy wid plunks I seed Ike 'gin to take notice. At de fust call fur mohners, he wus up an' whilst dey wus prayin' Ike got me to post him on de wuckin' uv de hat. I 'splained to him dat all I needed wus er good deacon fur hat-passer an' dat I allers gin er tithe to de deacon, 'cordin to de receets. I didn't hafter 'splain to him what

a tithe wus befo' he come to our 'lijun in great shape. This fotched all his gang, an' sech er love feast as we had!

" 'Now, Ike,' I whispers to him, 'I's gwinter preach a soulful sermon, an' I spec's you to do de res'.'

" 'I think you've hit 'em jes' right,' sez he, sorter keerless; 'dey all been paid off yis'day, an' I kalkerlate dar is jes' about five hundred good dollars scattered in dat búnch uv niggers.'

"I tole 'im I hope he be vigilant in de cause."

" 'Ain't I de deacon uv de hat?' sez he.

" 'You is,' sez I.

" 'And I gits er tithe?'

" 'Sartinly,' sez I.

" 'Whut's de watchword uv de deacon?' he asks.

" '*De Lawd loveth er cheerful giver,*' sez I.

"He kep' on sayin' it over till he knowed it, an' den he went back an' locked de do's, lockin' up every nigger dar.

"He wus a 'swasive nigger, as well as er holy terror, an' ever nigger dar wus mortal skeered uv him. I nearly drap outer de pulpit when I seed his methods. He hung er big basket on de muzzle uv his durringer an' went down de aisle, stickin' dat gun under de nose uv every nigger an whisperin', '*De Lawd loveth er cheerful giver,*' an' '*Cast thy bread upon de wotters.*' An' dey jes' fell over each other, when dey look down de bar'l uv dat gun to reach dat basket wid de stuff dat er fool is soon parted wid. Dem dat didn't have de change, flung in fives an' tens, an' dem dat didn' have nothin' flung in collar buttons, razors, buckeyes, snuff boxes

an' terbacker bags. None uv dem didn' want ter spute de p'int wid er bad nigger wid his han' on de trigger an' de muzzle in deir face tellin' 'em so 'swasive to give to de Lawd.

"Boss, it wus de bigges' collecshun ever tuck up in niggerdom, an' I's still liven' on de proceeds. When Ike fotched it up an' poured it out dar wus:

"Razors	44
"Buckeyes	16
"Eelskins fur rheumatiz	10
"Ole pistols	14
"Knives	18
"Silver watches	8
"Pipes	49
"Snuff boxes	10
"Sasshay bags	13
"Money	$487

"Hit wus er clean haul, but you could er cut de silence in dat church wid er knife.

"I gin out de doxology and Ike let 'em out, but dey went out so glum I felt bad, an' I sez:

" 'Ike, dat new kinder meetin' is er *pre*nounced success, but I's 'fraid I'll nurver git 'em back again.'

" 'We don' need to,' sez Ike, as he counted out his part.

"De nex' week I met Ike an' I axed him if he wus still stickin.'

" 'Still stickin'?' sez he, contemplative lak; 'Br'er Washington, you don' know how good de Lawd has

been to me. You know, I uster be er bad nigger, killin' and stealin' fur er livin'. But sense I got yo' kind uv 'lijun I bin different. Jes' to show you, I went into a sto' de other day to see er man. But he had went out fur er minute, an' dar wus nobody dar, an' dar wus hung up er twenty-dollar silver watch on de wall. I reached up my han' fur it, an' de Lawd said: "Don' take it, Ike." I couldn' stan' it, an' my han' jes' drapped on er little ole pair uv five-dollar shoes, an' I slipped em in my pocket an' went out. Dat's whut de Lawd's done fur me."

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MARSE GEORGE

"NO, sah," said Old Wash the other night, "I ain't nurver seed jestus contributed jes lak it useter be done when we niggers helt de balance uv de power an' misterpreted de laws uv de lan'. It wus back in Reconstruction days—er skeme de publicans an' sinners 'rigernated to change de complexion uv de fightin' white fo'ks uv de South without changin' their pedigrees.

"Dey wanted to make white black, and black white, an' they cum 'bout es nigh succeedin' es de man who tried to make blackbirds white by whitewashin' their eggs before hatchin'!

"Bein' er wise nigger an' raised wid Marse George an' havin' some painful rickerlictions uv some uv my past experience in monkeyin' wid de cowhidin' end of ole Marster, I stayed on my side uv de fence an' left de speriment uv whitewashin' de eggs uv gamecocks to niggers dat had got er whole lot to l'arn about de unlawful proceedin's uv white fo'ks when they wus up ag'in er question uv life an' death. Wy it's scanlus de disrespect dat white fo'ks has fur er law dat don't fit 'em! If ole Moses had brought 'em down de ten comman'ments an' had added es de 'leventh, de Fo'teenth 'Mendment to de constertushun, 'bout evry'body bein' created free an' equal, dey would er spoilt de whole plan uv salvashun by bustin' dem tablets over ole Moses' head!

"We know now dat all dat reconstrucshun foolish-

ness wus wuss on de blacks dan on de whites an' dat wus bad enuff. Fur it sot our bes' friends ag'in us—our own white fo'ks—an' it brought to de front all dat wus low an' vishus in our own race. Reconstrucshun es put up on us by de publicans, was de daddy uv Jim Crow cars, lynchin' an' Kuklux.

"But dis heah Marse George thing—wal Suh, when we seed de jig was up at de ole home me an' Marse Georgé we went to Wes' Tennessee to run er cotton plantashun. It wus right aftah de wah an' de niggers wus ten to one down dar. Dey done all de votin', hilt all de offices, got all de taxes which de white fo'ks paid, an' ended in raisin' all de hell dat wus needed to complete de pictur'. An' de mos' uv 'it cum back to dey own fiahsides. Dey wus all common, low-down fiel'-niggers out dar, jes three generashuns moved frum monkeys, an' bein' er emernently spectabul cullid gemmen f'um de race hoss state uv Murry County an' havin' 'sochated all my life wid gentermen, I didn't have no standin' wid dat bunch uv baboons, dat run ever'thing in dat end uv de state.

"So me an' Marse George, we jes' 'tended to our own bizness uv tryin' to make two stalks uv cotton grow wid one mule, fur de Yankees had cleaned up all de stock dat wan't hid in de cane brake endurin' de wah.

"It useter be pow'ful lonesome uv er Sundays fur us, an' bein' away from home an' de blue-grass whar we useter spen our Sundays breakin' de thurrerbred colts, nachully we gin to git 'lijus fur lak uv healthy mental exercise an' sumpin' nurr to do. Es dar is no state es bad as dat fur er young man—hit leadin' frum hypock-

ercy in youth to note shavin' in old age, an' es he cudn't play poker wid er nigger, Marse George nachully wus lonesome.

"One Sunday we got er nigger to haul us some fiah wood an' Marse George 'mused hissef wid his Colt's pistol, shootin' at chips an' things I'd throw up, he allers bein' mighty handy wid his pistols, an' he didn't wanter lose de 'nack he had learned in de blue grass uv shootin' de heads off uv squrls, an' other varmints, not to mention de heads uv niggers ef dey got obstreperus.

"Wal, sah, bright an' early de nex' mornin' heah cum three mighty obstreperus lookin' niggers, ridin' hosses dey'd stole endurin' de wah, an' lookin' pow'ful solumn. Dey rid in de fiel' an' up to whar we wus an' one uv 'em sez:

"Sah, I's Cicero Caesartum, Gran' High Consterbul uv de Realm uv de Land, an' dese heah two gentermens is Pomeroy Patrick an' Brutus Begora, Second an' Third High Consterbuls as aforesed an' wharfore, an' we've got er *circum-fetchum* fur you dat calls fur yo' *habeas corpus* instanter!'

" 'Whut de devil do you coons mean,' sez I, ergittin' hot, 'er-ridin' over our plow'd groun', stoppin' our wuck an' flingin' you dog latin an' yo' pole cat perfume aroun' on de mohnin' air? Ef it's de English language you is tryin' to speak,' sez I, er-winkin' at Marse George, 'jes listen at yo' Unker Washin'ton speak it pure an' ondefiled.'

"An' wid dat I struck er attertude an' shot dis bolt into de solumes' lookin' nigger: '*Sah,*' sez I, '*ef de*

nether habiliments uv yo' fundermental equipments wus es incompaterabul in makin' connecshun wid de res' uv yo' anatermy es de intelectual verbosity uv yo' consterpashun uv ideas, you'd be shot yosef fur indecent exposure of yo' own habus corpy-us!'

"At dat volley he coght his bref an' nearly fell outer de saddle.

" 'Sah,' sez he, 'I 'rests you fur contempt uv co'rt.'

" 'Oh,' sez I, 'I pleads g'ilty to de contempt part, but whar is de co'rt?'

" 'De Gran' High Consterbul is allers part uv de High Co'rt uv de lan',' sez he, drawin' hissef up er inch higher, 'an' we stan' no furrin cuss words lak yo' done flung at us.'

" 'But de co'rt ain't in sessun,' sez I.

" 'I's in sessun, sah, allers in sessun sah, I'll have yo' kno', an' you am 'rested fur contem't and dis heah white man heah,' he went on, p'intin' to Marse George, an' drawin' his *cirum-cum-fetchum* from his pocket ergin an' tryin' to read it upside down, 'am 'rested fur 'sturbin' de peace uv de Sunday. Yo' am recited to appear at noon to-day, sah, befo' de Honerbul High Co'rt of de Tenth Deestrick, de Honerbul Rastus Clowers presidin' an' answer to de charges er wherein, er wherefore an' er whizzin'!'

"I bristled up at dat sassy talk an' wus about to pull him offer dat hoss an' beat his High Consterbul head into er jelly, when it dawned on Marse George dat it wan't no joke, but dey had us 'rested fur shootin' de day befo'. An' he put his han' on my shoulder an' tole me to be still an' sed ever so nice to de niggah:

" 'Say to Squire Clowers dat I have no desire to violate de law uv de lan', dat I am not conshus uv havin' done it, an' dat as er law-abidin' citerzen I'll appear at de proper time to answer de charges ag'in me, an' I'll bring him wid me,' he sed, noddin' at me, an' be sponserbul fur his 'pearance.'

"Wid dat de High Consterbul bowed three times, givin' de millertery s'lute an' rid off.

"Wal, we went, Marse George fust stickin' his two Colts in his belt to have 'em ready in case de Co'rthouse cought on fiah. Mighty nigh ever' nigger in de deestrick wus dar to see er nigger judge try er white man. De house wus packed, even de winders wus full. De temple uv jestice dat day looked lak er rookery uv crows an' smelt er lettle mo' sivigerus than it looked.

"When Squire Rastus Clowers cum in he wus so black dey had to light de co'rthouse candle to see de crowd. He tuck his seat wid great dignerty an' cum down on de table wid er gravel an' sed:

" 'O yes, O yes, de Honerbul Rastus Clowers am now in sessun. *Fetch in de witnesses!*'

" 'Ef yo' Honor please,' sez de High Consterbul, 'I's got 'em all chained out in de thicket to saplin's.'

" 'Dat's right,' sez His Honor, 'but you can now fetch 'em in an' let de chains cum wid 'em. Solermun in all his glory,' sez he, er glarin' aroun' at de gapin' niggahs dar, 'had not de powah dat dis co'rt has.'

"By an' by heah cum de witnesses wid de chains on 'em. Sah, I nearly fell over. Dat fool Co'rt had tuck

ever' one of dem niggah witnusses an' had 'em chained each one to er saplin' in de woods. Dey cum in wid clankin' chains, makin' er turrubul 'pressive noise an' duly impressin' all de niggahs dar.

" 'Stan up!' sez de Co'rt, an' dey all riz holdin' up dey han's wid de chains still on 'em. 'Do yo' solumnly swear,' sez de Co'rt, 'in de presence uv Me an' Almighty Gawd to tell de truth, de whole truth an' nothin' but de truth?'

"Which dey did an' sot down.

" 'Let de pris'ner at de bar stan' up,' sez de Co'rt to Marse George, an' Marse George stood up, smilin' kindly among all dem niggahs, an' lookin' lak er thurrerbred in er mule pen.

" 'Have yo' got enything to say, sah,' sed he er glarin' at Marse George, 'why de sentence uv dis co'rt should not be passed upon you an' de writ of *cercherarity* executed on yo' body?"

" 'Why, yes, may it please de Co'rt, I'd lak ter kno' fur whut I's charged wid,' sez Marse George.

" 'Lem me see de papers, Mistah High Consterbul,' sez de Co'rt, an' lookin' lak he forgot dat part of it: 'Dis am er writ uv *cirum-cum-fetchum,*' sez he, 'enjoined by de Suv'renty uv de High Co'rt uv de Lan' fur de crime, fellerny and misdemeanor uv shootin' on de Sabbath agin de peace an' dignerty uv de lan'.'

"'I'd like to see dat section uv de code,' sez Marse George, 'dat sez it's er violation uv de law to shoot on de Sabbath onless in sech distance to er house uv worship to disturb it.'

"De Co'rt grabbed his code an' begin to hunt fer it.

Up an' down an' over pages he run his finger, de sweat standin' on his face, an' Marse George waitin' pashuntly At last he sed: 'It am de 'cision uv dis High Co'rt dat it can't jes' zactly put his finger on de spot sayin' it am er fellerny to shoot on de Sabbath, but de rule of *consanguinerty* an' nex' uv kin allers prevails in er case lak dis, bein' under de rule uv *nullius fillius* an' guverned by de law of consanguinerty uv blood an' de nex' uv kin. Now I finds de nex' uv kin right heah in secshun 49 dat it ain't lawful to sell licker on de Sabbath, an' de Co'rt am uv de 'pinion dat it's jes' es bad to shoot on de Sabbath es it am to sell licker, it bein' in accordance wid de law uv consanguinerty dat shootin' allers follers de whiskey, an' so we'll go to trial on de charge of sellin' whiskey.'

" 'You can't do that,' sez Marse George kindly.

" 'I can't?' sez de Co'rt er glarin' at him. 'Wal, jes watch me do it, an' be keerful yo' don't use no mo' superpulative remarks to dis co'rt or I'll find yo' fur contempt.'

" 'I appeals from yo' rulin' to de Cirkit Co'rt,' sez Marse George.

" 'I finds yo' five dollars fer sinnatin' dat eny body kin 'peal from dis Co'rt,' sed de judge.

" 'I asks fur er change uv venue,' sed Marse George, very low-like in his voice—mighty low, but I'd l'arned it allers come befo' some mighty high actin.'

" 'I'll hav yo' to kno', sah, dat dis Co'rt nurver changes enything.'

" 'I see it don't,' sez Marse George, 'not even it's linen.'

" 'I find yo' ten mo' dollars fur contempt uv co'rt,' he glared an' looked grandly over de bunch uv niggahs dat grinned back an' seem to enjoy it.

" 'I'll nurver pay it,' sed Marse George, risin' up an' shakin' his finger in de Co'rt's face.

"I seed sum niggahs begin to crowd up, cussin' an' spittin' fur er fight, an' I thort we wus sho in fur it.

" 'I finds yo' er hundred mo' yells de Co'rt, 'an' I orders de Consterbul to take yo' to jail till it's paid,' an' he riz up, glared at Marse George an' pounded de gravel whilst de niggahs crowded up lak wolves aroun' er hamstrung steer.

"But Marse George riz about de same time wid fight in his eyes, an' aftah makin' er few very unkomplementry remarks in language dat I don't want to put in de record, he lowed dat dey wan't ernuff niggahs in dat co'rt dat could do it, an' quick es er flash he pulled both guns, levelin' on de Co'rt fust. I heard er wild scramble uv niggahs fur de do' an' winder an' I seed de Co'rt dodge down under de bench an' heurd it holler es it bobbed up an' down:

" *'Don't shoot, white man, I'll giv yo' er change uv venom!'*

" 'Sit up, then,' sez Marse George, but still holdin' his gun on de judge, 'an' let me put de motion properly befo' de Co'rt.'

" 'Sartinly, sah,' sez de judge, bobbin' up, 'jes so yo' don't shoot.'

" 'I now moves,' sez Marse George, 'dat de pris'ner at de bar be released.'

" 'I second dat motion,' sez I, mighty peartly.

"Dis sounded like good law to de judge, an' he sez: 'It am moved and seconded; dat de pris'ner at de bar be released. All in favor uv dat moshun say *aye*.'

"An' ev'y niggah dar dat wan't already out behind er tree, yelled '*aye*.'

" 'It am so ordered,' sed de Co'rt.

"An' me an' Marse George walked out."

HIS FIRST KU-KLUX

"AFTER de niggers wus sot free," said de old man when I asked him for a Ku-Klux story, "dey wus lak sheep widout er leader, an' didn't kno' jes whut to do. Menny uv 'em tho'rt somebody wus gwinter tak keer uv us—lak es not Marse Lincoln—jes lak ole Marster useter do—an' so dey loafed erroun' till dey mighty nigh starve, waitin' fur de forty acres uv lan' an' de mule dat had been promised 'em fur votin' wid de 'Publicans. Now, when fo'ks ain't wuckin' dey nachully gits into mischeef. But it ain't easy fur one man to git into mischeef by hisse'f, he has to have he'p, an' freed niggers flock together es nachully es blackbirds. An' in de flockin' is de mischeef brewed.

"Dey fus' begun to get together in dese heah distracted meetin's, an' dar's whar all de raskality had its beginnin'."

"I'll haveter tell you 'bout dese heah meetin's es dey wus de wust orgies enybody ever seed out uv de jungle, tho' they went fur church meetin'. Ever night de niggers would meet thar an' sech carryin' on under de name uv 'ligun you nurver seed! Dar would generally be four preachers an' they 'ud preach all night. T'wards midnight dey'd all git warmed up an' den de women 'ud go into de 'ligun dance, shoutin', singin' an' turnin' 'round an' 'round till dey fell into de trance. Dey'd stay in dis trance sometime two days an' nights an' when they'd come to,

they'd have de awfulles tale to tell which dey call dey experunce. Dis experunce 'ud make yo' blood freeze. Dey nearly allers went fus' to hell whar Satan 'ud take them erroun' an' sho' 'em de pits uv fiah full uv de damned. Sometimes he'd hol 'em over dese pits er-grinnin' an' threatenin' 'em wid fiah if they didn't 'knowledge him an' forsake de Lawd. When dey'd broke erway frum him an' run off in de woods to pray, Satan 'ud foller 'em an' tho he cudn't tech 'em whilst dey prayer wus on—kase he cudn't break de spell uv prayer an' he cudn't tech eny one dat wus prayin', still he'd git behin' 'em in de woods an' bark lak er wolf an' break down trees wid er turribul noise an' do all he cud to distract dey minds an' break up de prayer so he cud lay han's on 'em ergin.

"But ef you prayed on you wus all right fur de angul 'ud come an' take you up to heab'n an' sho you de glories uv hit. I's knowed 'em to be in er trance two days an' nights an' when dey come to, they 'ud tell tales uv hell dat 'ud warm de kinks outen de other niggers ha'r.

"In all uv dese meetin's dar wus allers brothers pinted by de preacher dat we call de Holders. Dar bizness wus to hol' de sisters when dey git to dancin' an' shoutin' an' see dat dey didn't hurt deyself. Den when dey went into de trance we'd hafter lay 'em out on de grass till dey cum to.

"Uv dese Holders I wus generally de most popular.

"One night Sister Tilly went into er turribul trance an' didn't kno nuffin. She wus spinnin' erroun' an'

shoutin' an' entirely outer her head an' singin' er song dat run:

I don't want to live in dis lan',
I want to live in Heaben!

"Jes fo' she fell in de trance Brer Peter he run up to hol' her an' she sung out;

Don't want Br'er Peter to hol' me
I want Br'er Wash to hol' me!

" 'Cose I hilt her!

"Dis same Sis Tilly cum mighty nigh breakin' up de meetin' dat night. Some fool niggers tuck her out when she went into her trance an' laid her on de grass on de slope uv de little hill. Ef she'd laid still she'd er bin' all right but she went to kickin' an' rollin' erroun' out dar an' rolled down into er groun'-hornet's nes'.

"Wal, sah, you never seed enybody cum outen er trance es quick es Sis Tilly! She cum bilin' into de church whar all uv 'em wus gwine on, an' stid uv comin' wid prayers she cum er cussin'. She jes wanted to see de fool niggahs dat laid her by dat hornet's nes', an' when she seed 'em she lit on one uv 'em wid tooth an' toe-nail. Dat niggah had er wife an' she lit back on Sis Tilly an' pretty soon ever 'oman in dar dat wan't in er trance wus in er fight. Dey fit fur er hour an' when it wus all over dey wan't nuffin left but de preacher an' he had clumb frum de pulpit up into de rafters uv de church an' looked lak er ole possum on er grapevine. Ever now an' den he'd call out: '*Be quiet sisters—peace, be still!*'

"It raised sech er racket dat Squire Clowers, de same Jestus dat tried Marse George, had us all up befo' him fur disturbin' 'ligus sarvices. But we proves to him hit wus er festerful dat night an' we paid at de do' an' hit jes got turned into er meetin' by chance. Soon es he heard dat he sed:

" 'Who tuck in de funds,' sez he.

" 'De do-keeper,' sez I, 'Brer Peter.'

" 'Wal, den,' sez he, 'I fines Brer Peter on de groun' dat he ortenter let in foks dat is liabul to fight.'

"Dat sounded lak good law, but I allers tho'rt he fined Brer Peter kose he wus de onlies one dat had de funds.

"Wal, dese meetin's went on till by an' by dey turned into orgies uv devil worship an' stealin.' All de meanness uv de naborhood fur miles wus traced to dese meetin's. Frum dese meetin's niggers went to steal an' burn white fo'ks barns, kose all de time dar wus white carpet-baggers in de lan' sicken 'em on to aggervate de white foks. Dese carpet-bagging men voted 'em lak sheep an' hilt all de officers, fur our white foks cudn't vote under de law.

"I knowed sumpin' nurr gwineter happen an' hit did happen when ole man Jones, er good ole white man, wus waylaid an' robbed an' killed in his own yard.

"Now whenever er nigger do eny mean thing, hit ain't er day befo' ever' uther nigger in dat settlement knows who done hit an' nary one of 'em will ever tell on him.

"Hit's es nachul fur er nigger to hide his criminals es it is fur er wolf to hide her young. I knows es well es

I am er ole man an' er nigger myself, dat every nigger in dat Brownville Kumpany knows who shot up Brownville, but nary one uv 'em will tell ef he wus up to be shot fur hit.

"An' so before night we all knowed it wus Kit dat killed an' robbed ole man Jones.

"Dat night when de meetin' wus at full blast I seed my fus Ku-Klux. An' ever nigger dar seed 'em, too, an' nurver will fergit it.

"De moon wus shinin' when we seed, fru de church winders, er kompany uv ghost-horsemen ride outen de woods.

"Dey cum slow an' solum one behin' de yudder, dressed in long white shrouds dat kivered dem an' dey even had dey horse skivered with ghost clothes. Dey wus ghost-men on ghost-horses, that cum out uv de woods from no whar an' es they rode erlong dey nurver se'd er word nur made er sign. Hit wus de awfulles' sight I ever seed.

"Befo' we cud break outen de doors an' winders an' git erway dey had marched es solum es death erroun' de log church an' had us swronded. Den, widout er word, but at de sign uv de grave-leader, dey faced de church an' stood solum es tombstones. Niggers turned white dat night dat had been bohn black befo' daylight. Some went under de benches but de mos' uv 'em wus froze to de bench. Den whut you reckon? Dat leader wus on er fine hoss dat had sense lak er man, fur he rid him right in de church do' an' cum down de 'ile, *tramp, tramp, tramp* es solum es Gabriel on er hoss uv fiah.

"One look wus nuff fur ever niggah dar. Dat grave-man on' dat grave-hoss, an' not er word comin' frum de man, an' not er soun' frum de hoss cept his *tramp, tramp,* es he walked up de 'ile. Some whispered at it wus de angul on de fiery steed, but ole man Pete, de oldes' nigger in de flock, he sed out loud:

" *'Hit's ole Marster dat wus kilt in de war!'*

"De grave-man muster heurd him, fur he turned his hoss at de pulpit an' faced de crowd an' pinted wid his long bony finger fur de water bucket.

"Some nigger, mighty nigh skeered to death, handed it to him an' fo' Gawd, sah, he jes drunk off de full bucket at one drink!

"Den he sed in er deep low voice dat seem to cum frum de bowels uv de hoss he rid:

" *'Thanks, friend! I ain't had no watah since I wus kilt in de fust battle uv Shiloh.'*

" *'Hit's ole Marster—Gawd, I sed so!'* sed ole Pete es he made er dive fur de hole whar er plank wus up in de flo'.

" *'It is I,'* sed dat same deep voice. *'Pete is right!'*

"Den he pinted his bony finger at Kit dat wus seem to be dazed an' sed:

" *'Kit, murderer uv ole man Jones, prepare to meet yo' Gawd!'*

"He beckin to Kit an' dat mean niggah walks up to him jes like er lamb, he cudn't no mo' he'p it den he cud fly. He wus ashy an' shakin', but he marched up an' when de leader pinted to de do', Kit marched out, de grave-man an' hoss follerin' him.

"We seed 'em circle roun' Kit an' den de whole

THEN HE PINTED HIS BONY FINGER AT KIT.

company uv ghosts marched off wid Kit to de woods, no man makin' er soun' but jes de *tramp tramp, tramp* uv de hosses.

"We lost no time gittin' out uv dat church, some even gwine through de roof es dey wus already up in de rafters.

"De nex' day we found Kit's body swingin' to er lim' in de woods an' pinned on hit wus dat strange sign, K. K. K. which we afterwu'ds larn'd meant KLU-KLUX KLAN.

"An' dat settled de meetin's an' de meanness in dat settlement fur good."

UNCLE WASH AT THE FAIR

THE county fairs have been in full blast in Tennessee this fall, but I did not know that Uncle Wash had been off trying to run one until he ambled into my study the other night, the hungriest-looking, most woe-begone darky in Tennessee. He had rheumatism in his back, mesmerism in his head and a have-you-got-any-cold-victuals kind of a look spread over his countenance. I thought he had been through the famine in India and had floated home on the gang-plank of a wrecked vessel.

"Look erheah, boss," he said, as soon as he had stuck his head in the doorway, as if trying to distract attention from his own looks, "I jes' cum over to ax you is de gol'-bug de microbe uv de yaller fever."

"Why, no," I said. "It's a different disease altogether."

"Wal, jes' tell me, den," he said emphatically, "when dat wave uv prosperity gwine ter git out'n de three-minnit class, enyway—jes' tell me!"

As this was too much for me, I had to take the old man's sarcasm and say nothing.

"I tell you, sah," he went on, "when er man starts out on er campain on de circus whar I b'en, wid er stable uv hosses, he better take 'is dinner an' 'is 'possum dorg erlong wid 'im, or he'll go hongry sho!"

I looked at the old man in astonishment. When I had seen him last, he was fat and hearty.

"Where have you been?" I asked, "that you should

bob up in this well-fed neighborhood looking like an old horse led off to the shambles?"

"Hit all cum erbout dis way," said the old man shamefacedly. "You see, I dun b'en out on er campian. De cullud fo'ks gin er fair down in Giles County an' I thort I'd go down, take my ol' pie-ball pacer an' rake in all de filthy luker floatin' erroun dar. You see," he said proudly, "my ol' hoss hol' er worl' record —he am an' 'only.' "

"How so?" I asked in feigned surprise.

"He am de only hoss in de worl' dat has er record uv 2:29, er curb, two spavins an' er glass eye! Dar am er hoss in Ingyanner dat hav er record uv 2:29, er curb, one spavin an' er glass eye, but he ain't in it wid my ol' Pie Ball. Yas, sah, dat's de wurl's record he hol's. An' so, ez I wus sayin'l I thort I'd jes' go down an' rake in dat filthy luker wid 'im. I didn't have no harness, but I happen ter think erbout de little red-an'-white steer dat died so handy-lak las' winter jes' in time fer me ter feed all de preachers dat filled my house endurin' de deestrick conferdence," the old man winked, "an' I made er mighty good set uv harness outen his hide. You see, I didn't have time ter git de ha'r offen it, an' when my ol' blue pie-ball pacer got ter pacin' fas' down dar erroun' dat track, I tell you, sah, hit wus de pooties' sight you ever seed— he made er red-white-an'-blue streak cl'ar 'roun' dat track, an' de niggers all hoorayed an' say he look lak de speerit uv Star P'inter wrap'd in de flag uv our country, an' gwine in 1:59¼! I's patentid dat idee in harness, an' I's gwine ter use it nex' yeah fur speckicle effec'."

I looked interested, and the old man came in and sat down in his usual chair, near the door.

"Wal, but whar to git de sulky wus de naix question. Arter thinkin' over it I des remembered dat Brer Moses Armstrong had married de widder Johnson's buxomes' gal las' fall an' he had bin er-haulin' truck ter town in er ole high-wheel sulky dat Marse Ed Geers use ter train ole Hal P'inter wid at de ole track down by de crick. Now, I knowed whut Brer Moses would soon need wuss'n enything in dis worl', an' so I swop 'im dat ole ellum cradle dat me an' Dinah done raise all de chillun in, fer dat sulky. An' when I hitch ol' Pie Ball up, sah, he ack dat proud an' sassy I felt mighty nigh es good es er buxum widder angel in er paradise uv bal'-haided men. I knowed all de excheckers uv dat Giles County fair wus jes' es good es reposited in de cash drawer uv my britches pocket an' I jes' lit out fer Giles County wid great expectashuns in de sulky an' ol' Pie Ball in de shaf's.

"But when I got down dar, sah, whut you reckin dem niggers dun dar? Dar wus er mighty crowd uv 'em at de fair groun's, an' de fus' thing I seed wus dis paper stuck up all over de groun's, an' on de trees an' fences," and the old man pulled out an old-time poster headed with a darky leading an ass, whose ears were longer than his legs. I looked and it read:

CULLURD FO'KS ERTENSHUN!

Gran' picknick an' free-fur-all race at der race track nex' Sat'dy. Ladies an' gents, widders an' yaller gals, 'specially invited to percipertate, but babies an'

Meferdis' preechers barred. De followin' fam'us drivers wid deir hosses will be dar:

Free-fur-all race. Purse, Br'er Shadrack Lewis's Coon Dorg.

Pie Ball B. R. G. G. N. H. H.....
.....Br'er Washington.

Limber Jim B. M. K. P. L. D.....
.....Br'er Simon Suggs.

Kuntry Sawsage G. J. N. S. U. D. B.....
.....Br'er Lay Low.

Admisshun 10c; but eny gent escortin' er yaller legged chicken er gal kin cum in free.

De Cummitty.

"That's plain enough," I laughed, as I handed him back the poster, "but all these letters after the entries—what do they mean?"

"Oh, dat's patentid," said the old man, "dat's plain ernough—dat's plain ernough. Dem letters am new things on de track an' am dead good tips to de crowd. Don't you know whut Pie Ball, B. R. G. G. N. H. H. means?" he asked. "Why it means, Pie Ball, Blue Roan Gelding, Got No Holes in Him!"'

"Ah, I see now," I said, "and the other is Limber Jim, bay mare—"

"No, suh," cried the old man, "you wrong ergin. De naix one means, 'Limber Jim, Bay Mule, Kin Pace Lak De Devil,' an' de las' one am 'Kuntry Sawsage, Gray Jinny, Not Skeered uv De Ban!' An' dat's whut made me mad," went on the old man; "I 'spected ter meet hosses, not mules and jinnies an' I raised er

mighty kick. I driv up ter er nigger settin' sidewize in de saddle on er ole gray mule in front uv de jedge's stan'. Sez I sorter mad-lak:

" 'Mister, whar am de seckerterry uv dis associashun, an' whar am his headquarters?'

"He drawed hisse'f up an' say, sorter bitter-lak:

" 'Ef you contemplates formulatin' eny interrogashuns consarnin' de regulashuns uv dis 'sociashun, suh, I begs ter circumnavergate eny previ'us disquietude by info'min' you dat *I* am de seckerterry, suh, an' my haidquartahs am in de saddle, suh!'

"I shot er dagger look at 'im an' sez I, quiet-lak:

" 'I knowed you wus er damfool, soon ez I seed yer, but I thort you knowed de diff'unce twixt yo' haidquartahs an' yo' tailquartahs, sah!' An' den I lit inter dat nigger an' dat associashun! I tol' 'em I fotch my famous hoss all de way down dar ter race ergin *bosses*, not mules an' jinnies, an' fur *munny*, not coon dorgs an' chitlin's. But de fools up in de jedges' stan'—an' you know it am de easies' place in de worl' fur fools ter git inter—'lowed dat dat wus er pacin' race, an' dis wus de lan' uv de free an' home uv de pacin' hoss, an' bofe de jinny an' de mule would make me think dey sho'ly had de right ter compete fer de coon dawg.

" 'But how you 'spec' me, ef I win,' sez I, 'ter feed my hoss an' me wid er coon dorg? I kain't eat 'im,' sez I.

" 'Dat's all right, Br'er Washington,' sed de jedges, 'but sense de gol'-bugs dun cohnered all de munny in de kuntry, we hafter git back ter fus' principles, an' so

we make coon dorgs en sech things our mejums uv exchange. An' I tells you right now dat er coon dorg am good fur ten dollars' wuf uv sawsages enny day in dese parts. Why, you am bettah off dan de 2:24 pace,' sez he—"dat's payable in chitlin's an' tuckey tails.'

"Wal, I seed I wus in it, an' es I wanted er good coon dorg enyway, an de widder Johnson dat I wus kinder seekin' arter hed cum out ter see me win, I jes' 's well make de bes' uv hit, so I hook up ol' Pie Ball an' cum out on de track. An' Law bless yo' soul, you jes' orter seen de 'plaws we got!

"But hit made me mad when dat blamed ol' pacin' mule an' jinny cum out on de track. Befo' dey even gib us de wurd, dat ol' mule tuck ter buckin' an' er-snortin', an' she skeered ol' Pie Ball so he run inter widder Johnson, dat I wus courtin' an' hed cum out ter see me in all my glory; hit 'er square in de stummick stept on her fifth wheel, an' punctured her tire—leastwise dat's whut I heerd 'em say! De ole lady fainted an' dey had ter take her off an' blow her up ag'in—leastwise, dat's whut dey tol' me. An' she ain't spoke to me sence! Dey had tu'k de coon dorg up in de jedges' stan'—to he'p jedge de race, I 'spec'—an' es we cum by in all our glory, dar he set, lookin' mighty nachul-lak an' happy, an' hit tickled him so he barked lak er ol' army petard jes' es we got op'site 'im, an' it skeered ol' Pie Ball so he paced clean over de fence, an' back ergin an' den beat de gang home two links. Oh, I wus sho' proud! But when I got back, whut you reckin dem fool jedges say to me?

"Dey say: 'Br'er Washington, we fine you er poun' uv terbacker fur layin' up dat heat.'

" 'Good Heben, gen'l'men,' sez I, 'I didn't lay up no heat—I won it.'

" 'De new rule say you shain't lay up no heat, don't it, suh?' sed de jedges.

" 'In cose it do, but I didn't lay up no heat; I won it, I tell you.'

" 'Br'er Washington, you don't ketch us. When you lay up er dollar you save it, don't you?'

" 'Yes,' sez I.

" 'Wal, you save dat heat an' in cose you lay hit up. Whut's layin' up er heat but savin' it?' sez dey. 'In cose de heat's yo'n, but we hafter go by de rules an' fine you jes' de same. Jes' han' us out dat poun' er terbacker,' dey say, 'or you don't go 'possum huntin' behin' dat dorg. How you 'spec' 'sociashuns gwineter prosper ef dey don't tax de winner?'

"I wus bilin' mad, an' I sed, sorter bitter-lak: 'Gen'l'men, I means ter cas' no infecshuns on yo' feracity, but hadn't you bettah let de coon dorg jedge de res' uv dis race?' Den I tu'ns off smilin', sarcasm-lak. But dey didn't min' my talk ertall, but calls fo' de naix' heat.

"Wal, suh, we got off fur de naix' heat, but dat dorg-jedge up in de gran' stan' cu'dn't keep 'is mouf shet ter save 'is life. 'Sides dat, he cum er t'arin' down arter us an' chased us up de track lak er yaller cyclone in er barn lof'. I'se heerd uv drivers chasin' stakes befo'," laughed the old man, "but I nurver heerd uv de stake er-chasin' de drivers. Hit skeered ol' Pie Ball inter

er break, but hit skeered de ol' mule an' de jinny into de fas'es' pace dat I ever seed turn er corner! Befo' I knowed it dey wus er-goin' down de track lak er pair uv ol' rusty lizards down er rail fence, an' ef ever I had eny doubt 'bout dat ol' mule an' jinny bein' in de free-fur-all pacin' class, hit soon lef' me an' no mistake! Befo' I knowed hit dey wus er quahter uv er mile erhaid uv me, wid dat coon dorg still er-chasin' 'em an' er-barkin' an' bofe uv 'em er-pacin' lak er team. De ol' jinny's ye'rs wus laid back lak er jack rabbit's, an' de ol'e mule's wus laid for'ds lak de cow-ketcher uv er steam engine. Her tail p'inted to'des de Nawth Stah, an' his'n to'des de horizon, an' twixt 'em, es long es de dorg kep in de rear, dey wus er-bustin' P'inter's record all ter pieces. I reefed an' reefed ol' Pie Ball, but when he settled we wus so fur behin' we cu'dn't tell which way ter go, so I jes' follered de coon dorg's bark lak I wus out 'possum huntin' an' driv on. An' somebody hollered out, 'Does you think dey kin pace now, Br'er Washin'ton?' an' I heerd de niggers laf lak dey fall outen de gran' stan'.

"Thinks I ter myse'f, sump'n gotter be done er me an' Pie Ball gwine ter be beat by de oneryes' pa'r dat ever went roun' er track.

"Now, when you can't win by speed, you mus' try sump'n' else," said the old man sagely. "De bes' gine'als, whuther in er race er in er war, am de ones dat's got brains up dey sleev es well es in dey haids, an' de man dat kin look on de laws uv common sense an' circumsense am jes' dat much bettah off dan de one dat do nuffin' but shoot de guns he happen ter have. Now

when I wus young I larned ter blow my mouf lak er dinner hawn, an' when I seed dey had me beat, I jes' slapped my han' up ter my jaw an' sed, '*Toot—toot—tuu—uu—u—u!*' jes' lak er dinner hawn fer all de worl'." Here the old man laughed till he nearly fell out of his chair.

"An' whut you reckin happen? Why dat blame ol' mule thort it wus de dinnah hawn sho' 'nuff, en es he b'en allers stopped when dat tooted, he stopped es quick es er pewter bullet when it hits er mud bank, an' Br'er Simon Sugg div outen dat sulky seat lak er skeered bullfrog huntin' fer water. Den de ole mule turn roun' an' answer dat hawn wid: '*Kebonk—kebank—kebee—ee—e—e!*' jes' es nachul es all de worl'.

"An' de ole jinny," here the old man had another paroxysm of laughter, "she thort she recognized dat voice, hit soun' so much lak de mule's daddy, an' she stopped so suddin she an' de sulky bofe kicked up behin' an' sent Br'er Lay Low huntin' fur grass, an' befo' dey knowed it I paced by de whole gang an' *lay up* ernur'r heat! Sho' 'nuff de fool jedges fine me erg'in, but I wus 'tarmin'd ter have dat coon dorg an' I paid hit lak er man.

" 'De puss am yo'n, Br'er Washin'ton,' said de jedges; 'git you er good rope an' go haul it in.' "

Here the old man sighed audibly and showed every inclination to stop.

"Well, I hope it was a good dog," I said sympathetically.

"Marse John, you ain't nurver b'en in er race wid er pacin' mule, is you? Wal, you ain't posted on de

cussedness uv dat animule. When I went down de stretch ter git my stake, de cussed mule had paced over him an' kilt him! My puss sho' wus daid! I traded ol' Pie Ball off fur er good dinnah en ernuff munny ter git home wid, an' when I go out on de gran' circus ergin hit'll be ter pace fer de dollars uv our daddies an' not fur coon dorgs en chitlin's." And the old man ambled out to put an extra corn pone and some sweet potatoes in the ashes, when he covered up his fire for the night.

OLD PUNCH

DID you ever notice it, Marse John," said old Wash the other night, "dat dere is allers some ole nigger in ev'y town down Souf dat is allers de bigges' Ike in it an' has been made that way by bein' sp'iled by white fo'ks?" I had noticed it—the most striking example being the old man himself; but I only smiled and nodded assent.

"Uv course he is allers er Dimmicrat. Dere is jinnerally allers jes erbout one Dimmicrat nigger in er county uv 'em, an' dis is the one de white fo'ks make er fool uv by lettin' him do eny thing he pleezes, whilst he makes er fool uv dem by doin' it. Dat nigger can't do no harm—he's er Dimmicrat. Don't keer how sassy an' lazy an' meddlin' an' no-'count he is, he's er Dimmicrat, he's the one lam' that's been redeemed from the flock. It's funny, but they'd ruther have the honor of gettin' one ole nigger to be er Dimmicrat than to convert er dozen white men."

"An' sech er nigger," went on the old man, "is sech jinerally de mos' meddlesome an' se'f-important an' conceited cuss that ever got the upper han' uv de res' uv de race. Standin' in wid de white fo'ks, he is es sassy as er jay-bird on Friday, sayin' an' doin' what he pleezes. An' it's 'stoundin' to me whut they'll stan' offen him. They'll take things from him dat dey'd kill er common nigger fur. He butts into all de white fo'ks talk jes lak he wus one of 'em, gits big wages fur

hangin' 'round de co'rthouse or some sto' doin' nothin' but sweepin' up onct er week or so, bringin' in er little coal an' water when he ain't playin' backgammon, co'rtin' some ole sassy nigger that's allers comin' to see him, or meddlin' in de affairs uv his betters. An' fur all dat the white fo'ks dat he's tied onto stan' it, thinkin' he's de onlies' nigger in de wurl till he dies uv plum laziness an' beer an' whiskey swillin' an' den dey all bury him wid great pomp, actin' es pall bearers deyselves.

"No, no, they ain't got no use fur er real, hard-wuckin' nigger dat stays at home an' tend's to his own bizness. Whut white fo'ks really love in de nigger tribe is er big-mouth, greasy-complected, fat-bellied ole nigger that calls 'em all *Marster* an' *Mistis*, votes wid 'em an' loafs erroun' tellin' 'em nigger yarns an' ticklin' dey vanity, an' makin' out he's so humble he couldn't eat ef white fo'ks wus lookin' on, but in fact bossin' 'em in everthing frum drawin' his wages to namin' de babies!

"It's funny enyway how de whole wurl will let some fo'ks do things it'll crucify others fur. Look whut it let Marse Teddy Roastfelt do—de high actin', knee-bangin' gaits dat man went! An' hit wus all right!

"Dat wus Teddy!

"But you jes let Marse Billy Taft try dat gait an see whar he will lan'. He's got too much sense to try it! An' white fo'ks is the same way 'bout dey wimmins. I's seed meny an' meny er one dat led de ban'-wagin wid enywhar frum two to er dozen husban's an' nobody seem to keer, not even her

husban', an' long es she lead de ban'-wagin and stayed in high society it wus all right. But let some ole maid be cocht kissin' her cat an' dar wus er scandal right dar!

"Sech er nigger es I've tole you uv wus ole Punch dat lived at Macon, G'orgy.

"I went down dar 'bout twenty years ergo wid Marse Henry on er co'rtin' trip. Leastwise, Marse Henry went to co'rt an' es I's nurver been in er town long widout fallin' from grace to de charms uv de fair sects, I wus soon payin' my tenshuns to er mighty fine lookin' widder dat I thort might be 'swaded to go back wid me to Tennessee.

"An' I'd er done it right erway ef it hadn't been fur dat nigger de whole town called ole Punch. He wus porter in de bigges' sto' in town an' owned de white fo'ks in it same as ef they wus his'n. Him an' me had it red hot fur de widder but it bein' his home an' him bein' er boss-nigger, I soon seed I wus carryin' too much weight to run in ole Punch's class wid eny sho' fur de widder.

"Dey gin er ball fur Marse Henry an' me, er kind uv er maskerade ball, and Marse Jimmy Jones that run de sto' whar Punch wus boss, he went as er soljer, carryin' er big dagger-knife two foot long made out uv wood and gilt paper, but lookin' mighty lak de real thing.

"Now ole Punch find dat knife de nex' day in de sto' an' havin' nothin' to do, es usual, he 'mused de town de nex' day skeerin' de life outen country niggers. Of course de white fo'ks all put him up to it by standin' 'round an' laffin' at him, an' Punch wus in

his glory. He'd put dat big wood knife in his belt, make out lak he wus half drunk an' walk erround till he seed some skeery lookin' country coon. Then all at once Punch would grab him in de collar, draw dat knife dat looked lak it wus er yard long an' all steel an' wid awful oaths start in to eat dat coon alive an' carve him. De po' nigger, taken unawares an' thinkin' Punch wus de turribles' man alive, would break into er dead run an' nurver look back till he wus safe in de tall timber.

"Den de white fo'ks ud' nearly die laffin' an' Punch would start erroun' lookin' fur anurr country nigger.

"All long he done dat till he skeered ever' nigger out uv town.

"Dat night him an' me met at de widder's by accerdent an' Punch he wus braggin' how he'd skeered de niggers out uv town. He boasted an' bragged so I seed I had no sho' fur de widder. She jes thort he wus de bigges' nigger dat ever come down de pike.

"To-morrer bein' Sat'day he wus gwinter have mo' fun an' he axed de widder to come down to de sto' whar he had er pair uv silk stockin's fur her, er box uv snuff, two bottles uv peppermint oil an' er New Testament. Thar she wus to sit on de front seat an' see Punch run common niggers out uv town.

"I went away feelin' mighty bad, fur I knowed I had no chance 'gainst all dem presents an' pusson'l bravery.

"Es I went into town de nex' day I seed er ha'f crazy nigger dey called Looney dat jes had sense enuff to fight his weight in wildcats. Him an' me got pretty

thick an' after I gin him er dram an' er half plug uv Tennessee tobacker, he wus my bosum frien' for life.

"When we got to de town I stopped an' tole Looney I wus er little feared to go eny furder.

" 'What's up?" sez Looney, 'ain't been after chickens las' night, is you?'

" 'No,' sez I, 'but dar is er turrible bad nigger in town dat's run amuck an' he's liable to do us harm.'

"I seed Looney's little, mean eyes flash an' he 'lowed he wan't feared uv him.

" 'No,' sez I, 'neither is I, but I's frum er peaceful state I is, an' I'd hate to have to hurt enybody on dis visit.'

" 'Wal', sez Looney, 'I ain't frum sech er peaceful state an' I's gwine inter town!'

" 'Wal, ef you is,' sez I, 'I think you'd better take dis pistol to defen' yo'se'f,' an' I give him er ole six-shooter wid er barrel er foot long an' I had loaded it wid big loads uv powder but no balls.

" 'Now,' sez I, 'jes take dis, it shoots six times. Dat nigger is named Punch an' when he tackles you wid his big knife, kill him befo' he reaches yo' heart an' nobody'll ever pester you for it.

"Looney sed he'd do it, an' we went in.

"Sho' 'nough Punch wus dar an' had already run six niggers out uv town, whilst all de white fo'ks, even de town marshal, wus givin' him all de rope he wanted, an' had quit dey own bizness to watch de fun.

"An' dar sat de widder on er goods box dippin' snuff

an' laffin' fit to kill at de mighty deeds uv Punch. It wus plain to see dat whut she laked wus pusson'l bravery an' wan't Punch er mighty man uv valor, bigger dan de town marshal, who seem to jes let Punch run de town.

"I tried to interest her, but she wouldn't look at me. Tennessee niggers had no charm fur her es long as Punch wus de whole show.

"By an' by heah come Looney loafin' erlong an' lookin' lak er skeered dorg at er public fightin'. Soon es Punch seed him he gin de wink all aroun' an' it wus tipped off all down de line an' soon everbody stood in sto' doors watchin' to see Punch skeer Looney into er fit. Punch sidled 'long by Looney, eyin' him sideways, but Looney, thinkin' he wus er sho' nuff bad nigger, never tuck his eyes offen Punch. All at once Punch gin er war whoop, drawed dat knife dat looked lak it wus er yard long, grabbed Looney in de collar an' sed fiercely:

" 'Whut de devil you gwinter do heah, you chicken-stealin' son uv darkness? Run fo' I kills you!'

"But Looney didn't run, an' he soon seed whut he wus gwinter do, fur he thort sho' Punch meant to kill him an' quick es er flash he drawed de ole pistol an' *bang* it went off right in Punch's face.

" 'He'p, Marse Jim, fur Gawd's sake I's kilt! I's kilt!' yelled Punch, turnin' er handspring back'ards an' startin' down de main street hisse'f, wid Looney right after him an' bofe uv 'em borin' er hole in de air.

"*Bang!* went de ole gun again an' we seed Punch jump twenty feet. *Bang! bang! bang!* an' down de

street he run yellin' fur Marse Jim, de town marshal, to shoot de fool nigger quick!

" *'Kill him, Marse Jim, for Gawd's sake, he's shot me through an' through,* 'wus de las' we heard uv Punch es dey went over de hills, Punch er little in de lead.

"Punch didn't come back for two weeks, an' befo' he did I married de widder."

HOW MISS CELESTE SOLVED THE NEGRO PROBLEM

IT was a few years after the war. She came from Boston, and her name was Cousin Celeste McHiram Winthrop. She wore the first pair of nose glasses and the first pair of boots I had ever seen on a woman. She was angular, square of jaw and positive and came South as the representative of a society bent on finding out all there was to be known on the negro question. Incidentally she was a member of The Boston Anthropological Society and was after original sources for future papers. Being our cousin, she boarded in our home and as she would be busy she was given the district school to teach. It was in the Summer vacation, and one month during the absence of all the family at the springs but me, Cousin Celeste took charge of the house-keeping.

Hence this story:

And a fine woman was Cousin Celeste in her way. But in Tennessee her way was the square peg in the round hole. As teacher of moral philosophy in a large school in Boston, Secretary of the Anthropological Society and Critic for the Saturdays Emerson Club she was a great success.

But as mistress on a Southern plantation home!

The first jar came from Aunt Dinah, Uncle Wash's redoubtable spouse. Now Aunt Dinah had cooked for my grandmother, and my mother, and had been in our

family just sixty-five years. In the change of things by the war, they never seemed to know they were free, and, save the regular paying of wages under the new order, instead of the gifts and care of the old, no other change was made in their simple life.

Cooks—they are the only monarchs under heaven that I, a free born American, will bow down to. For them I reserve my stateliest bow, my most servile homage. The place is theirs, and the pantry and the fullness thereof. Their word is my law, and so long as they cook I am their cringing slave. For was it not the great Scotch dyspeptic, Thomas Carlyle, who once remarked that all he was certain of in this life was that he had a stomach?

"Your majesty, and how goes it with you this morning?" I always ask as I sneak into my breakfast, thankful that it is there. If she deigns me a smile and a gracious reply I am her servant. And if with it the waffles are browned to their right color, the chops are just rare enough, and the eggs boiled just three minutes; aye, then I am her slave.

A man in his forgetfulness, may some morning fail to salute the wife of his bosom; in his arrogance and false pride he may even fail to kiss his mother-in-law, but woe unto him if he fail to remember his cook and neglect those little courtesies!

And so Cousin Celeste had been with me a month, perhaps when Aunt Dinah came in one morning with:

"Look aheah, chile; I specs I's gwinter hafter leave you."

"Now, Aunt Dinah, that's a good joke. What have we done to you now?"

"Oh, nuffin', chile—nuffin'. I likes you all jes es much es I ever did, 'specially dat are new 'oman frum Bosting. She is sho' er daisy, or, I shu'd have sed, er bunch uv mighty sweet ole dried-up sage blossoms, an' me an' her cu'd git erlong furever. No, I hates pow'ful ter leave you all, chile, arter all dese years, an' I done nus you an' yo' blessed mother befo' you, but I jes heurn now frum my darter down in Giles County, an' de little gran'chile dat was so peurt is kinder got de limber legs, an' I specs I hafter go down dar an' see ter it."

I looked at Aunt Dinah. I knew that peculiarity of negroes, that, however just their cause for leaving may be, they never tell you the real one when they wish to go. Besides, her extravagant praise of Cousin Celeste told me at once what was the matter.

"Now, Aunt Dinah, you know that grandchild is all right. The limber legs never was known to kill children. Tell me what is the matter?"

"Lor' bless me, chile, dey ain't nuffin de matter wid me. It mighty nigh breaks my heart to leave you, chile!"

"Aunt Dinah," I said, looking her very closely in the eyes, "what has Cousin Celeste been doing to you?"

"G'wiffum heah, chile! Huccum you guess dat so quick? I believe white folks kin jes see through er nigger soon es dey look at 'em."

She shook all over with cunning laughter. Then, seriously:

"Chile, I bin wid you all 'long 'fo' you was bohn, ain't I?" I nodded.

"Wal, jes' tell me, did you er eny body else ever know me ter take de rappin' uv yo' finger?"

"Aunt Dinah," I said, impressively, and with my most becoming bow, "I would trust you with the key to the pantry of paradise. I'd turn the very storeroom of heaven over to you, knowing full well that, while you managed it, not a celestial sandwich, not a cherub doughnut would be missing."

"Thang Gawd fur dat! I knowed you would, chile. Glory halleluja fur dat! Hit's jes laik' you, bohn er gem'man an' can't he'p yo'se'f. And so wud de angel Gabriel, yessah, de angel Gabriel, dat bosses de gates uv heaben—he'd say de same—he'd trust me, too! An' arter he'd knowed old Dinah an' e't er few uv my batter cakes an' waffles wid honey, he'd cum' by de kitchen uv heaben ever' mornin' an' say: *'Heah, Dinah, bless yo' ole soul, jes' take de pantry keys an' git out whutever you wants, an' don't be scrup'l'us 'bout it—dey's 'nuff fer us all. Don't you give us no baked beans an' cold, clammy bread an' codfish balls. Dat's de bill uv fare dey have in Bosting, an'—an' down dar,'* sez he, er pintin' wid his finger down below, *'but give us Tennessee rare roast beef, an' Southdown lambs fed on blue grass in de apple orch'd, an' hot cohn pones, an' beat biskit, an' fried chicken wid fritter cakes, an' flapjacks wid Louisiana syrup, an' North Carolina chicken pie! Feed de angels, Dinah, fur de craps nurver fails in dis land uv light.'*

"Dat's whut Gabriel hisse'f'd say."

I nodded approvingly.

"Wal, now, chile, ef de angel Gabriel hisse'f'd say dat' de verry boss man uv heaben hisse'f"—here she paused, drew herself up two inches and shook from side to side for emphasis—"does you reckin I'se gwinter stan' dat ar 'oman nosin' erroun' dat pantry, an' allers axin' me whut I git out *dis* fur, an' whut I git out *dat* fur? Nosin' an' nosin' erroun', an' eyein' whut I puts in my batter cakes, an' er measurin' out de flour—listen, chile, whut I's tellin' you, but fo' Gawd hits true es I cross my heart!—er m-e-a-s-u-r-i-n' out de flour lak' de wan't ernudder wheat crop in de wurl', an' er w-a-i-g-h-i-n' de rice, an' allers a d-o-l-i-n' an' er d-o-l-i-n' out de lard, lak hit wus de alabaster box uv de ile uv de las' bucksheer on de top side uv yearth! Tell me, chile, long as I bin wid you all, did you urver know me ter take de rappin' uv yo' finger? An' now, in my ole age, to have dat ar 'oman heah an' 'flectin' on my keracter lak' dat, castin' spurgeons on my robe dat has bin spotless an' puore all dese years—" Here Aunt Dinah broke down, sat in the corner of a chair and wiped away tears with her cook apron.

I shook my head sympathetically. "That's too bad, Aunt Dinah, too bad. But I don't think she meant it that way."

"Now ole mistis, she'd say ter me,

"'Heah's de keys, Dinah; git breakfus', an' heah's de keys, Dinah; git dinner,' an' heah's de keys, Dinah; git supper; an' I'd git 'em, an' dat'd be all, an' nobody didn't think I wus gwinter steal eny thing!'

"But dat ain't de wust uv it, Eber since she bin heah she bin er-callin' me Mrs. Grundy—listen chile, whut I's tellin' you; fo' Gawd, hit's true! —er-callin' me Mrs. Grundy! At fust I thort she wus doin ' hit fur fun, an' I'd laf an' say: *'Mistis, white fo'ks don't call culler'd fo'ks by dey las' name in dis country—'tain't 'spec'ful.'* But you think she didn't jes' keep on a—Mrs. Grundy an' a—Mrs. Grundyin' me, twell one evenin' when she had her supper by hitse'f, an' I fotch in her tea, an' she say: *'Mrs. Grundy, won't you sot down an' have er cup uv tea wid me?'* Listen chile, whut I's tellin you; 'fo' Gawd, its true! I lak'ter fell down on dat flo'. I cum' mighty nigh, ra't den an' dar, tellin' dat 'oman whut I thort uv her. How she 'spect me ter have eny 'spec' fur her when she ain't got no 'spec' fur me? Ef it hadn't bin fur leabin' you, chile, heah by yo'se'f—leavin' you to eat de col', clammy, an' paralyzed stuff she'd make fur you, er cross betwixt cold bread, baked beans an' de spawn uv codfish, an' all beat up wid dis heah Emersun Club she's allers tellin' 'bout (dough fur my part I'd nurver give my red-ellum biskit-pin fur all de Emersun clubs)—I'd jes' er-quit ra't dar! Eny white 'oman dat'd do dat can't 'spec' no culler'd 'oman ter stay wid her, dat's all!"

"That was very thoughtless, Aunt Dinah, but I am sure she didn't mean anything by it. She has been raised so differently from us," I said .

"Wal, den, I's sorry fur her raisin, den, dat's all! An' I ain't 'spons'bul fur it, nuther! Don't de good Book hitse'f say: *'When sinners entice thee, consent thou not; an' 'void the 'pearance uv evil.'* "

It was some time before Aunt Dinah spoke again, so great was her indignation. Then she blazed out:

"Listen, chile; now lis'en whut I's gwine tell you. Jes' lis'en yo'se'f, an' tell me ef you'd stan' hit. Whut you reckin she's doin all de time when me an' you ain't lookin' at 'er? Writin' me an' my ole man down in er book—lise'n, chile; 'fo' Gawd, it's true!—puttin' us down in black an' white fur ter take us back up to Bosting an' scannerlize our repertashun wid, an' er-makin' us say de mos' outlandish things, an' er-talkin' lak' we nurver talked in all our life. Usin' us ter solve sum' problem, she call it, an' er-writin' us down in black an' white ter be de laffin' stock uv de res' uv de wurl'. Chile, lis'en ter me your own se'f now, wid yo own years, an' tell me ef you'd stan' hit?"

She was so indignant she could proceed no further.

"That's bad—very bad, Aunt Dinah. I'll see that that is stopped."

This pleased her immensely, and she broke out into a laugh as she said: "Chile, de cu'us questions she kin ax—he, he, he!—'nuff ter mek' er owl laff at his grandaddy's fun'ral. She'll set erroun' so quiet lak', you don't think she's loaded an' not gwine go off so onexpectedly. She'll jes' be settin' dar, so quiet lak', den all at onct, bang! Off she goes, an' fires sum paralizin' quest'un ra't inter yo' fifth rib. I tell you, chile, whenever dis writin' fever gits holt uv er ole maid, dey ain't no doctor livin 'kin tell whar de dognosis uv her condishun gwine end—dey aint! She's liabul ter do mos' eny thing—she sho' is!"

Aunt Dinah laughed again. "T'other day she wus

joggin' erlong, knittin', 'tirely reconciled an' gwine 'long easy an' smooth lak', not seein' er thing ter shy at, wid her pencil an' paper handy, dough, an' all dat, when all at onct she shied clear outen de road wid:

"Mrs. Grundy, lemme ax you er question: 'Huccum puddle ducks allers so quiet 'twell dey happen ter git togedder, den dey jabber an' go on so?'

"'Mistis,' sez I. 'I don't know, but hit's zactly de same way wid wimmen fo'ks.'

" 'Ah, dat am a cu'us 'zemblance,' she sez, 'Ah, so hit am; an' I'll make it de princerpullest p'int in my chapter on "De Kinship in Anermal Life." An' she sot hit right down den an' dar under de head uv puddle ducks an' wimmen fo'ks.

"Den she allers axin' me sum question which she thinks is calkerlated ter solve dat nigger problem she's allers talkin' 'bout. She don't know I am onto it, but I is. Sez she:

"'Mrs. Grundy, does you feel eny diff'runt now sence you free den you useter feel es er slave?'

" 'Bout de same, thank you, mistis,' sez I; 'bout de same. But I notice sence I's free I's got ter be mighty keerful how I eats col' cabbage fur supper—hit gives me er pow'ful miz'ry if I ain't 'tickler, fur I ain't so young es I useter be.

"She laf an' say: 'Oh, you don't understan' me. I wus fererrin' to dat interlecshul an' soulful feelin'. Does de free life give you eny stronger longin' fur immortality, an' desire to go upward an' onward; eny secret flutterin' uv de soul erroun' de innermos' chambers uv de heart, eny—'

" 'Not 'les I eats dem col' cabbages I wus tellin' you 'bout, mistis,' sez I. 'Den I seems to have all dem symtems at onct, 'speshly de flutterin.' "

Here Aunt Dinah laughed until I thought she would never begin again."

"But she axed de ole man de funnies' question de nex' day. He cum in frum de dairy wid de milk, an' she wus out dar er-joggin' erlong down de road jes' es natchu'l es life, an' not er-shyin' at er thing, es I wus saying, when all at onct dat writin' fever tuk 'er an' she grabbed her pencil, shied cl'ar outen de road, and sed:

" 'Mister Washington, I's allers wanted to ax sumbody er question, but I's nurver hed de chance. Would you objec' to my axin' you?'

"De ole man he pull off his hat an' he bow ve'y low, an' he say: 'Sart'n'y not, mistis; sart'n'y not. But ef you'll let de ole man be so bold, I hopes you won't put no mo' filler-gree work to my name. 'Deed I does. I can't stan' hit, mistis; hit makes me feel lak I done stole sumpin'.'

" 'Fillergree work to yo' name!' and she laf. 'Why, whut er funny ole culler'd gemmen you is! You'll mek' er fine cheracter fur er paper I'm writtin' on "De Nigger Question in de Souf." '

"Dat lak' ter skeered de ole man ter deaf. He drapt his milk-pa l an' his eyes bulged out, an' he sez: 'Mistis, fur Gawd's sake don't do dat! Whut is I urver done ter you dat mek' you wanter treat me dat 'er' way?'

" 'Why nuffin',' sez she, 'I thort you'd be proud uv it.'

" 'Fur goodness sake, mistis, you'll break my heart. So menny fo'ks hes come down here an' writ us up, er-makin' us talk lak heathen, an' er-chasin' us wid kodacs, an' er makin' us do er whol lot er things we nurver dreamed uv, dat now when I sees er 'oman er cummin' down de road with er pencil in her han' an' one uv dese heah fur-away, gwinter-write-you-up-enyway kinder looks in her eyes, I's ready ter clim' er barb-wire fence an' go through er bull lot, wid de bull arter me, to gin her all de pike she wants. Now, I's gittin' ole an' feeble, mistis, an' I can't go through bull lots lak I useter, so take pity on de ole man an' don't do dat!'

"De 'oman she look lak she didn't know 'zactly whut ter say, but she sez:

" 'An' why don't you want me to call you Mister Washington?'

" 'Lor', mistis,' sez de ole man, 'dat's wussern de writin' up bizness, an' hit cum erbout dis way: Arter de wah, I hearn so much 'bout de high 'spec' dey hilt de nigger in up in Bosting, an' 'bout dat literary atmosphere dat wus so congeenual ter fo'ks dat had bin raised in it, lak me, I 'cided ter go up dar an' begin life all over 'mong dem fo'ks. I'd saved er thousan' dollars ole marster'd gin me, an' when I got up dar I wus de bigges' man dar. Ever'whar' I go it wus *Mister Washington.* Den dey got to callin' me *Jedge Washington,* an' den *Kunnel Washington,* an' den I hope I may die ef I didn't soon git ter be *Gineral Washington,* 'twell I begin ter think myse'f I wus de father uv our kuntry done up in ebony. Cou'se dey ax

me ter eat wid 'em. Fust I cu'dn't half eat, settin' at de table wid white fo'ks, an' I lakter starve ter def. But dey kep on tellin' me we wus all equal now, an' one jes' es good es t'other an' so I *mistered* an' *jedged* 'em an' *Jineraled* 'em back an' lit in. Den dey want me to lectur', an' lectur, I mus'. Wal, I didn't wanter do hit, but I had ter do hit, so I went dar an' tole 'em de truf—dat ole master wus de bes' frien' I ever had; dat slavery wus de greates' blessin' dat ever happen fur de nigger, fetchin' 'im out uv darkness inter light; dat fur as I cou'd see hit wus all er big fambly wid us, but now, sence by de will uv Gawd hit hed all bin changed hit wus all right, 'cept we wus po' an' ign'ant, an' didn't kno' whut ter do, an' couldn't cope wid white fo'ks; dat whut we wanted wus ejucashun an' er chance to make er livin' an' not de ballot, 'ca'se wid it we'd make enemies 'mong de fo'ks we lived wid, an' git lynched an' shot an' have race wars whar de las' condishun uv us'd be worse dan de fust. I tole dem de truf, an' hit hes cum to pass jes' es I sed it would.'

" 'Wal, my money gin out arter er while, an' den I thort I'd go to work. But, whilst I wus still Mister Washington, I couldn't git nuffin ter do. I'd tuk keer uv hosses all my life, so I thort I'd try de big stables, but de man he sez: 'I's sorry, Mister Washington, but ef I'd hire you heah, ever' white man I's got'd quit.'

" 'Den I seed 'em buildin' er brick house. Now, I wus er good mason, 'cause ole marster he'd to'rt us all er trade. I wus Mister Washington ergin, but it wus de

same. De boss say ever man dar'd lay down his trowel ef I went to work.'

"'Den I 'cided dat literary air wus gittin' too cold fur me, an' I'd better git back home, ef I had to beg my way erfoot. So I started out, but I hadn't gone fur down de street befo' I seed er quiet-lookin', go-easy sort uver man, wid er soft felt hat on, an' er kindly smile, lookin' lak he wan't in no 'tickler hurry an' wan't tryin' ter git rich nor solve no problem, an' I stopped an' pulled off my hat an' sez: 'Good-mornin', marster.'

" 'He looked at me wid er funny sort uver smile an' sez:

"'*You damned ole fool, whut you doin' up heah.*'

" 'Lor', marster" sez I, "lemme hug you! You do talk so nachu'l!'

" 'Den I tole him all, how I'd cum frum Tennessee, an' had waited on Marse Felix Grundy, an' bin raised wid de bes' in de lan', an' wus now beggin' my way back 'ca'se I couldn't get no work ter do. Wal, sah, he cussed me out ergin fur being sech er fool, an' I hugged 'im ergin—I couldn't he'p it, hit come so nachu'l—an' he tuk me an' gin me er drink, an' sed he'd cum frum Tennessee hisse'f, an' he tuk me to er resterrant an' gin me er square meal, an' den he gin me money ernuff ter git home on, an' sed: '*Take dis an' go—go to de lan' whar de sun shines an' de birds sing; whar de sperrit uv de race hoss, lak dey whiskey, gits better es it gits older; whar dey ain't no art, no literchure an no lies; whar dey kno' er nigger ain't er white man an' nurver can be. Dey am good fo'ks up heah,*'

sez he, 'an' maybe dey don't know it, but dey luve de nigger in theory an' crucifies 'im in fact.'

" 'So I lit, mistis, an' ain't nurver bin ambish'us fur no handle to my name sence.' "

Here Aunt Dinah was quiet for awhile, and then she said: "Chile, I hates ter leave you, but you see yo'se'f I's bleeged ter go. But she tuk all dat down, an' when she finishes it, er-mixin' me an' de ole man up wid puddle ducks an' nigger problems an' all dat, don't you kno' we can't stan' it?"

That night I explained the situation to Cousin Celeste.

"Now Cousin Celeste," I said, "just give her the keys and let her alone."

"But she'll break you," said Cousin Celeste, "She's the most wasteful and extravagant thing."

"Yes," I replied, "but she has been with us sixty-five years, and she can make just that many kinds of batter cakes, and pies innumerable, and her cakes are immaculate, and her broils and roasts are fit for a king's table. Only let us be fed right, Cousin Celeste, and we can stand all the ills of life."

It was sometime before Cousin Celeste spoke. Then she said, dryly: "I think I have already solved the negro problem in the South."

"How so?" I asked.

"Once you owned the negroes—now they own you." And she snapped off to her room to finish a thesis for the Emerson Club.

HOW JENNY McGREW CAME TO HER OWN

THE field which the old man had been plowing did not look unlike an hundred others of Middle Tennessee. There ran the shallow creek beyond it, following the lime bluff of the hills, which, in the distance, died away in a scroll of purple against the sky line. Nearer, they were emerald with the deep green of the apple orchard, or shimmered, showing flakes of that restful straw-green which the June wind always makes when it moves through heads of ripening wheat.

By the clock it was nearly half to noon; but already he rested,—he and the lazy, gray, fat mule hitched to a small old fashioned bull-tongue plough. There could be no mistake in their attitude: the old darkey sitting on the soft grass, propped up between the plow-handles and fanning with a battered and drooped-brimmed wool hat, the old mule browsing amid the thick fringe of bordering blue grass—it meant rest, prolonged and complete rest.

"I am afraid you are a quitter, Uncle Wash," I smiled as I came up. There was a deprecatory wave of his hand:

"Dat bumblebee cohn sho' makes me tired, Marse John. No suh, I ain't never gwinter plant a'nurr' crap uv cohn on no mo' battle fiel's. I knowed befo' I planted it dat Hood an' dem Yankees done fit all over dis ole fiel' an' I was pow'ful anx's to rent dis

piece frum ole Miss fur dat reezun. I tho'rt too much blood had bin spilt dar fur it ever to be droughty. I tol' her de bre'f done went outen too menny men dar fur de lan' ever to gro' any-thing but moanin' weeds an' thistles, an' I cud keep *dem* down. An' den I'd heurd dat de grass wouldn't gro' on no spot whar er daid man had laid, an' thinks I to myse'f *'if dat's so dar won't no grass dar at all on dis fiel,'* fur dar is bin er daid man layin' on ever foot uv hit, fur I seed 'em dar myse'f de day after de battle.'

"Wal, bless yo' soul, hit looks lak dat de grass is all dat's gwinter gro' heah,—it sho' do!

"I c'lar to goodness, I don't see whut in de worl' ole Miss ever let dem men fight on her place fur. Dey jis' nachully played ruinashun wid hit.

"I done all I cu'd to make dat crap uv cohn I know'd, to begin wid, dat no cohn crap 'ud gro' if de cobs uv de seed-cohn wa'nt buried an' kept moist all summer. So I buried de cobs uv de seed-cohn myse'f an' kept de groun' moist ever day. I done all I cu'd to make dis crap—all but plow an' hoe it, an' hit ortenter needed dat, bein' as how it's been kivered wid de daid.

" 'Taint no good! Hit's dat dried blood an' all dem singein' red hot ghostes meanderin' 'roun' here ever' night an' scorchin' up things.

"Wal, lemme see. I wus jis historin' 'bout dis ole fiel'—hit's so full uv history. Befo' de wah dis bottom wus er level meader, an' de white fo'ks had all day fairs heah. An' sech times! Gawd, hoss racin' an' drinkin' home made licker outen barrels wid tin dippers

all day an' dancin' ergwine all night! You sed sumpin erbout er quitter—dat reminds me uv de story I bin historin' 'bout:

"Long in de 50's de craps wus pow'ful an' we had er big fair dat fawl an' sum fine mile racin' an' plenty uv quartah racin'.

" 'Bout de thurd day uv de fair, arter de hosses bin matched so often dat ever' body know'd whut dey cu'd do, hit 'gun to drag er little. Hit spiled de fun, fur dar wa'nt no chances lef'. Hoss racin' is lak er love-fair', if hit gits too one-sided de fun is gone. Es long es er gal is got you guessin' she's got yo' gwine. Es fur de fellah, if he shows his han' too soon, he's gwine do all de beggin' an' most uv de lyin'. An' dat's whut's de matter wid matrimony now; hit ain't bekase de fo'ks is tied up dat makes hit so mutton-noternus; hit's bekase de wife ain't got anurr' string to her bow to let her man kno' dat dis kin' uv injustice ain't sealed fur eternity.

"We men fo'ks is turrible! We cuts off all er woman's chances by marryin' her to wash-tubs an' babies, an' den we cuts er bee-line to new pastures, whilst she takes hern out in mo' chilluns, cookin', mumps, measles an' mem'ries."

He laughed quietly and chuckled as he leaned back against the plow handles and looked across the distant hills.

"But I's giwne to tell you how dat game wus sp'iled onct. Marse Richard he married my young mistis, Miss Jinny McGrew, de same dat owns all dis lan'—an' in marryin' her he got all her plantashuns,

niggers, bridle-presents, an' all uv ole marster's race-hosses dat he'd lef' her—his houn'-dorgs an' everthing. Got 'em all,—even her belle-days an' happy gal-days, jis fur er three-dollar license an' six chilluns in ten years.

"O dey wus 'bout es happy es uther fo'ks, but I seed de roses fade in her cheek an' whilst Marse Richard wus mighty proud uv her an' de chilluns, he kept all de funds in his own han's, dolin' it out to her jis lak he'd allus owned it, an' had give her odds in de trade.

"Miss Jinny, havin' all dem fine chillun to raise, jis had to stop gwine out—she had no pretty gowns lak she uster have, an' no funds to buy 'em. But Marse Richard, wal, he sho' wus mighty fond uv her an' mighty proud uv de chilluns an' de way he rushed de gals an' de gamblin' table wus er sight.

"He got so he didn't cum home only ever Sat'day night, but he wus sho' fond uv his wife an' chillun.

"Now her daddy, my ole marster, had er race mare by Timoleon named Jinny McGrew, fur his darter, dat had won in her day ever' big purse frum New Orleans to Balt'mo'. He tho't so much uv her,—she being named fur his only baby, an' never bin beat in her life,—dat he didn't give her in his will to young mistis, fur he know'd Marse Richard didn't have no sho'nuff hoss-sense an' 'ud trade her off fur some yaller dorg if he got ha'f er chance. So he gin her to Mister Billy Sparks, his overseer, dat had bin wid him all his life, an' no man's fool in enything.

"Mister Billy Sparks know'd he couldn't gee wid

Marse Richard arter ole marster died, an' so befo' de marriage cum off he moved to anurr' farm—er little hill farm uv his own—an' took Jinny McGrew wid him, all unbeknownst to Marse Richard. She wus er han'some dark gray three year ole filly den.

"I didn't see no mo' uv her fur ten years—de week uv de big fair. Es I wus tellin' you, we'd had fine races an' Marse Richard's hoss, Trueblood, had beat everthing both at long an' short distance, an' his owner wus dar havin' his own fun, an' all his own way—done furgot all erbout Miss Jinny an' de chilluns he wus so busy cashin' in his tickets on Trueblood. At night he wus dancin' de Verginny reel wid de gals an' braggin' on whut er great hoss he had in de stable an' whut er fine wife he had at home.

"He wus sho' mighty s'prized when twords de end uv de week up rid Miss Jinny in de fambly kerridge lookin' as pretty es when she wus er gal an' all de chilluns in dar wid her.

" 'Why, my dear,' sed Marse Richard when he he'ped her out, 'You heah? I's so glad you cum. Hello, boys,' he sed to de little fellers, 'you done cum to see Trueblood win de big race fur father? Bully fur you—chips off de ole block! Jis back yo' pennies on father's hoss—nothin' kin beat him.'

"Den up spoke little Robert,—he wus named fur his grandaddy, my ole marster, an' de very spit uv him he wus, an' he had hoss sense lak his ole gran'-daddy, an' he sed, talkin' very bold, lak de little man he wus: 'Father, I can't hones'ly bet on yo' hoss—he looks lak er quitter to me, suh.'

"Marse Richard's gentlemen frien's standin' by laughed out loud, de little feller sed it so ole-lak an' solum, an' Marse Richard flushed an' sed: 'Son, when yo're older you'll kno' mo'; an' don't be sassy befo' comp'ny er father'll hav to teach you er lesson right heah.'

" 'I begs yo' pardon, suh,' sed little Robert, 'I meant no disrespec'; but when my money goes up on er hoss I's got a right to 'spress my 'pinion, suh!'

"An' hit sounded so lak ole marster dat I nearly died laughin' an' wanted to hug him myse'f.

" 'All right,—all right, you're pardoned, son. You've got nerve lak yo' father an' yo' judgment I hope will be es good when you is older.'

"An' right thar I seed a light, but Marse Richard havin' no hoss-sense, he failed to connec'.

"An' I seed it plainer when Miss Jinny smiled an' sed nothin'. I know'd she had somethin' 'nurr up her sleeve. She sho' wus ole marster's own chile; an' when Marse Richard tole her ergin to make herse'f at home she sed ever so sweet: 'O, thank you dearie, but we got er little lonesum at home an' jis cu'd'nt help runnin' over to see Trueblood win.'

" 'So glad yo' cum,' sed Marse Richard—'so glad! Jis make yo' se'f at home,—you an' de chilluns. I's mighty busy. An' be sho' to play er little on Trueblood, it'll cum in handy dis winter when we want to go to de Gran' Op'ra at New 'leans.'

"Miss Jinny she jes laughed.

"By an' by, in er lull in de races I seed er hill-billy ride in de fair groun's on er ole marr, nearly white,

she wus so gray. She looked lak she jes cum outen de pastur' fur she had cockle-burrs in her tail an' she wus grass-bellied to beat de ban'. She wus follered by er weanlin' colt dat had de air uv er king an' cum wid his haid up an' his tail over his back.

"Enybody wid ha'f sense cu'd er seed he know'd whut er brass ban' an' er race-track wus befo' he wus bohn.

"At fust I didn't see dat de man ridin' de gray marr wus Mister Billy Sparks, fur we hadn't seed him fur ten years, an' none uv us know'd de gray marr wus Jinny McGrew, fur she'd turned white in them years.

"I fust caught on when I seed her throw up her haid at de soun' uv de ban' an' de ole ginger flashed in her eyes es she caught sight uv de crowd an' de clatter uv runnin' hosses, an' 'spite uv Mister Billy Sparks' two strong arms, she tuk de bit in her mouth an' rushed at de entrunce gate to de track lak er steam engine unthrottled.

"Den I know'd, spechully when I seed de natchul bohn airs uv dat colt dat acted lak he jes cum into his kingdom—er trottin', bold-lak, 'roun' his mammy wid his tail over his back an' cockin' his eye at de jedges in de jedge's stan'.

"I jes had to laugh at de sassy ways uv dat colt.

"An' Mister Billy Sparks, he sot on the ole marr es solum es er country deacon, which everbody tuck 'im to be,—or er nachul bohn-pall-bearer, he wus so dignified an' solum':

"'Eny place heah,' sez he to de gate-keeper, 'whar er gen'l'man kin hitch his ole marr whilst she suckles

her colt? De ole marr is mighty fond uv her colt an' has allus made it er pint to suckle him pretty reg'lar.' "

"De gate-keeper laughed an' sed: 'Take her to de hitch yard wid de mules. Dis gate is fur de race hosses to cum in.'

" 'Wal,' sez Mister Billy, 'she's nurver run wid mules in her life an' she ain't gwinter start dis late in de game. *I* ain't 'zactly satisfied when she's outen my sight, an' *she* ain't 'zactly satisfied when de colt's outen *her'n*,—she's mighty fond uv dis colt, an' so I'll jes set on her heah fur I cum to see de races.'

"Den he flung one laig over de ole marr's back an' settled in fur er side-way spell to watch de races. De gate-keeper he wanted him to move on, but he sot on de ole marr lak death on er tomb-stone an' 'lowed in his solum' way dat he'd *cum to see de races*, an' *whar he wus wus er fair good place to see 'em.*

" '*I* want to keep *my* eye on de ole marr,' sez he, '*she* wants to keep *her'n* on de colt an' *he* wants to keep *his'n* on de race-track, fur he's gwinter be er race-hoss hisse'f,—an' so I'll jes set heah whar it kin all be done at onct.'

"It looked lak dar wus goin' to be er row 'twixt him an' de gate-keeper but Marse Richard cum out uv er big tent nearby, 'bout dat time, an' he'd been playin' poker an' takin' de usual habilerments dat went wid it, an' de fust thing he seed wus dat blood-lak colt er trottin' erroun' wid his tail over his back an' er tryin' to git over de fence to de race-hosses.

"Now Marse Richard had jes ernuff hoss-sense to be struck wid dat tail over dat colt's back an' dem

fool airs he wus puttin' on, an' he stopped an' sed to Mister Billy:

" 'Say, ole man, but dat's er mighty han'som colt. Whut's he by?'

" 'He's by Dan Rice,' sez Mister Billy, not takin' any ondue notice uv Marse Richard.

" 'Pow'ful good colt,' sez Marse Richard, 'pitty he had er scrub dam.'

"De ole man shot his eye down quick an' keen.

" 'Wal, she may be er scrub but she kin jes clean up arry thing on dis groun' fur er half mile,—barr-footed an' grass-fed es she is.'

"Marse Richard laughed an' looked at de ole marr fur de fus time:

" 'O, sez he, 'an' whut's *she* by?'

" 'I disremember 'zactly' sed Mister Billy, 'but I think she wus sired by er ole scrub dey call Timoleon, an' ef I cu'd git up er little half-mile dash, gentermen,' he sed, stroking his beard solum-lak, 'I'd hope to prove she wus worthy uv her breedin'.

"Marse Richard an' de gentermen dey nearly died laughin':

" 'An' you want to race her, does yo'?' sed Marse Richard, er winkin' at de uthers.

" 'Dat's whut I kinder had in my min' as I rid erlong,' sed Mister Billy: ef I cu'd only sep'rate her an' de colt—she's onduly fond uv dat colt,' he sed eyeing de colt proud hisse'f.

" 'How fur do you calkilate she cu'd run,' asked Marse Richard, winkin' erg'in at de uthers.

" 'Wal,' sed Mister Billy, er shiftin' his laig to de

right side uv de ole marr an' settin' up straight, 'I think I can divorce her an' dat colt long 'ernuff fur her to run er half—she's onduly fond uv dat colt, genter*men*. Yes, barr-footed an' all dat, she cu'd run er half—least-wise I'd gamble dat she cu'd genter*men*.'

" 'Look heah, ole man,' sed Marse Richard, 'you look lak er good ole country deacon.'

" 'I is,' sed Mister Billy er strokin' pi'usly his beard; 'I is, genter*men*—ole Zion Church, Hickman County—er most onworthy follower uv de prophet Jonah an' er good race-hoss now an' den.'

"Marse Richard laughed: 'Wal, Deacon,' sed Marse Richard, 'I hate to rob yo' uv es good er colt as dat, but jes to git up er little excitement, I'll race yo' ha'f wid Trueblood, an' I'll play de hoss ergin de colt. I lak dat colt,' he sed, lookin' at de rascal er'gin—dis time makin' er mouth at anurr' hoss over de fence.

" 'You'll hafter let me hol' de colt at de wire, genter*men*—de ole marr's onduly fond uv dat colt, an' ef he's hilt at de wire she'll do her best to git back home by suckin'-time.'

" 'O hol' him at de wire, on de wire, or thro' him over de wire,' sed Marse Richard, 'it's er go. But who'll ride yo' ole marr—you are overweight?'

"De deacon nodded at er small hill-billy boy standin' nigh: 'He'll ride her—my little gran'-son—he's rid her arter de cows befo'. I wouldn't choose er better rider dan he is. Ef his galluses don't break he'll never fall off an' he do ride lak hell-fire in er close place. Excuse me genter*men*, but when I's on de race track I sometimes furgits I's er deacon at home. Whut I meant

to say wus dat he do ride lak de devil beatin' tan bark! Dat fust remark wus onnecessary an' onbecomin' uv me—excuse me genter*men*. Now I'll rub de ole marr down an' git her er good feed uv cohn. When shall I be reddy?'

" 'At three,' sed Marse Richard, still laughin'. 'An' say,' he added, 'you kin back out now ef you wish—Id' hate to rob er deacon uv so good er colt,' he sed, sorter bitter-lak.

" 'Don't menshun it,' sed de deacon, 'de colt is already yourn. Now dat you've pinned me down I'll hafter tell you dat I's been lookin' fur some nice genterman to give him er way to fur some time—somebody wid hoss-sense dat I know'd wu'd raise him up in de paths uv rightusness an' give him er chance in life, an' I couldn't er foun' er nicer man to gin him to if I'd scraped er blue grass county wid er curry-comb. He's yourn. I'll hol' 'im at de wire wid er halter so you won't hafter run 'im down when you wins, fur I knows er genterman wid hoss-sense when I sees 'em,' he sed, lookin' hard at Marse Richard.

"Marse Richard flushed, but he thanked 'im—he wus so tickled. He never had hoss-sense ernuff to see de ole man wus coltin' 'im an' he wus one uv dem kinds uv fools dat is tickled to be hit wid er comperment even ef hit comes wropped erroun' er brick-bat.

" 'Thanks,' says Marse Richard, 'an' by-de-way, you ain't gwin'ter back out when I wins him?'

" 'O sartinly,' sed de ole man, flushin' hot fur de fust time, dar's whar you'll hafter watch me. De fact is, I wus bohn backin' out. I's er cross 'tween

er craw-fish an' er balkin' mule; but when I makes er nice genterman er present uv er leetle ole no-count colt early in de mornin' I kin generally be 'pended on not to steal 'im back outen de pastur' befo' sunset.'

"De wager soon spread all over de groun's an' ever'body wus sorry fur Mister Billy Sparks, all uv 'em agreein' dat ole Zion up in Hickman had sent out er Jonah dat wu'd soon go into his eternal home in de belly uv er whale. Dem dat didn't think de ole man wus crazy tho't he wus er simple-minded ole fool dat had never seed er hoss-race an' tho't bekase his ole marr cu'd beat all de scrubs er quartah in de woods uv Hickman she cu'd beat de wurl'.

"But dat dar little Robert, he laked to kilt me when I heurd 'im talkin' jes lak I heurd his ole gran'-daddy an' struttin' roun' chawin' rosin an' makin' lak it wus tobaccer an' spittin' an' sayin' to de fellers dat sed Trueblood wu'd beat her er quatah in de ha'f: *'O, gentermen, whut you talkin' 'bout. De hoss is er yaller dorg,—he'll fetch er stick outen de pond ef you'll thro' hit in. Why, he'll bury er bone ef nobody wus lookin'. Beat de marr? He can't run fas' ernuff to beat er drum. My money is up on de gray, gentermen'*—an' den he'd strut erroun' in his knee-pants an' ever'body laughed.

"De airs he'd put on wus er toss-up 'twixt dem uv de colt, still struttin' roun' wid his tail over his back!

"When de time come an' dey fotch out Trueblood he wus er gran' sight—in de very pink uv er good fix an' looked lak he cu'd run fur er kingdom. An' dar sot dat little rat uv er boy, settin' on de ole gray marr an' she snortin' an' squealin' fur her colt one minnit or

prancin' fiah-eyed an' full uv runnin' fury de naixt tryin' to break way wuhther or no.

"An' de colt—Mr. Billy Sparks wus dar, swinging to his halter at de wire an' sayin' ever now an' den: *'Hurry up, gentermen—I can't hol' 'im long, he's so sivigus, an' he's 'bout es fond uv his mammy es she is uv him!*'

"An' little Robert, I had to laugh—he stood right by 'im an' offered to bet his very britches on de marr.

"Marse Richard heurd 'im an' got awful mad. He cum up to de little feller an' sed: 'Son, I's gwin'ter teach you er lesson an' some hoss-sense right heah.'

"Little Robert flushed 'kase he didn't kno' his father heurd 'im bettin' his britches.

" 'See dis ten-dollar gol'-piece?' ses Marse Richard, lookin' fierce-lak at little Robert, 'take it, an' ef dat ole grass-bellied marr wins, hit's yourn. Ef she don't—listen now, I's gwin'ter take yo' pants off, an' make yo' go home in yo' shut-tail; that'll humble you an' larn you some sense too!'

" 'I really didn't mean it, suh,' sed little Robert, ''bout my britches, but my word is my bond, suh, an' havin' sed it, I'll stan' by it. I agree to yo' condishun, suh, an' you'll fin' me right heah when de race is over.'

" 'Washington,' sed Marse Richard, turnin' to me an' still so mad his voice trembled, 'You take de boy's pants off es soon es de race is over an' lead 'im home down de very middle uv de pike. Do you heah."

"Yessah" say I, winkin' at little Robert.

"Dey wus soon lined up at de wire an' when de ole marr wheeled into line she stopped her foolishness an'

I seed dat nervus playin' uv her years, de flash uv her ole eyes, de quiverin' uv de flanks dat wus ready fur de leap:

" 'Look,' sed er man standin' by Marse Richard, 'don't you see dat ole marr is on to dat game?—she knows whut she is doin."

"Marse Richard looked worried an' at de tap uv de drum never did I see any thing but er gray ghost split de air lak she done! *Flash!* an' she tuck de pole right under de hoss's nose!

" 'Great Gawd!' sed Marse Richard, his jaw droppin' —'whut—'

" 'De gray marr! de gray marr!' yelled de crowd.

" *'Jes' tryin' to git home to her colt, gentermen!'* yelled de ole man, holdin' on to de halter while er great light gleamed in his eyes. 'She's onduly fond uv dat colt!'

"On dey cum, de gray marr's tail, cockled-burred till hit looked lak er rope, flyin' out behin,' her barr feet fannin' de air lak de buzzin' paddles uv er double-decker, an' runnin' es easy es er swaller bird flies!

"An' Trueblood, de starch all outen him runnin' er length behin'!

"Marse Richard stood foolish an' pale: 'Great Gawd' he sed, 'Whut is de matter wid her—whut—'

" *'Tryin' to git home by suckin'-time, suh, hits de colt she's thinkin' uv!'* sed Mister Billy.

" 'Stop her!' yelled Marse Richard, snappin' his watch at de quartah—'She'll kill herse'f—she's run dat quartah in twenty-five seconds!'

" 'Let 'er die,' sed Mister Billy, 'She'll die game, an' dats mor'n dat dorg she's runnin' wid'll ever do!

Besides, gentermen, hits mother love wid her—she's comin' home to her baby,' he sed so dry an' earnes' dat de crowd had to laugh.

"Dey cum de naix quartah lak er cyclone, an' fifty feet frum de wire, beat, heart-broke an' worsted, Trueblood's tail hung limbered an' lifeless, while de ole marr cum in runnin' lak er queen wid her petty-coats afiah.

"As she passed under de wire de ole man, his eyes shinin', turned de colt loose an' yelled: 'Go *darn ye, an' finish de race. You air es big er fool 'bout yo' mammy es she is 'bout you,*' an' down to de naix quartah de pair raced lak er ghost an' her shadder, de little hill-billy on her back, laughin' lak he wu'd fall off an' de crowd fairly goin' crazy an' yellin' at sech er sight.

"When dey stopped hit wus er motherly whinneyin' an' er suckin'-match right on de track!

"An' de crowd—wal, sech laughin' an' yellin! Hit took Marse Richard er minnit to git his bre'f an' anurr' minnit to git his tongue:

" 'Great Gawd! I can't let you have dat hoss, ole man,' sed Marse Richard, lookin' pale eroun' de gills an' mo' solum dan I had ever seed 'im fur twenty yeahs. 'He's entered in ten futurities in my name. I'll have to pay de money an' keep 'im. Won't you let me do dat?'

" 'Wal,' sed de ole man, 'seein' yo' hoss never had time to ketch his bre'f frum so sudden er start, an' bein' an' ole fool an' er nachul bohn crawfish es I tol' you, an' havin' er heart uv charity fur de misfortunes uv my feller man, I guess I'll jes take de cash instead. To be hones', it don't take very much money to make me

think I'd ruther have hit in my pocket dan to have him in my stable.'

" 'Thank you,' sed Marse Richard, 'dat's kind uv you, an' shall I jes write you er check fur five hundred?'

" 'Wal, I guess he ain't really wuth dat much,' sed de ole man, ever so deacon-lak, 'but I have allus made it er pint to price my own hoss at whut I tho't de uther feller wu'd likely be willin' to give. I've larnt he's entered in twenty thousand dollars uv stakes an' I am thinkin' you'd be willin' to pay ten uv 'em to keep yo' standin' es er genterman on de turf an' not be expelled fur enterin' hosses you don't own.'

"Marse Richard turned white an' den red, but he saw de pint an' writ his check fur ten thousand mighty quick, tho' hit tuck all he had in bank. Es he handed hit to de ole man he sed: 'An' now will you be kind enuff to tell me who you air, an' whut's dat ole marr's name an' jes whut you'd call dis kin' uv er fool race eny how?'

" 'To-be-sho,' sed de ole man, er lookin' careful over dis check to see dat hit wus all right, an' payin' no ondue notice uv Marse Richard; 'to-be-sho,' my entitlements is Deacon Billy Sparks, dat onct lived wid Kunnel Robert McGrew; an' de marr is Jinny McGrew, dat he gin me befo' he died an' tol' me to take keer uv her lak I wu'd my own chile, an' to sell her an' gin de money to *his'n* when she got into de pinch dat he know'd wus cumin' fur her. An' seein' she's got hit, ef I wus huntin' fur er headin' fur de story, seein' as how hit worked bo'f ways, Miss Jinny bein' in de gran'stan' an' de colt at de wire, I jes don't think I cu'd give hit er

better headin' calk'lated to 'spress de idee intended, dan 'Jinny McGrew er comin' to her own!'

"An' Marse Richard's jaw drapped fur de light dawned on 'im good.

"Straight to de gran'stan' walks Mister Billy Sparks, hat off, an' check in han' an' up to Miss Jinny he went an' gin hit to her:

"'Hit's yourn, madam,' he sed, er bowin' low lak he'd seed ole marster do. 'I's heurn tell dat since my good frien', yo' father died, you's been er little short uv cash at times, an' in presentin' you wid dis check I but carry out my promise to es fine er genterman es ever lived, an' es good er frien' es ever gin' er po' man er start in life.'

"An' bowin' low ergin he mounted de ole marr an' rid out while de crowd cheer'd em, an' de colt went out wid *his* tail still over his back.

"An' Miss Jinny tuck hit an cashed hit too, fur Marse Richard fur onct had sense enuff to grin an' humor de joke dat wus de laugh uv de county.

"But when little Robert 'proached 'im an' sed: '*Father, ef you please, shall I jes keep dis ten dollar gol' piece an' take hit home in my britches pocket*?' He sed, 'sartinly, boy,' very short, an' got busy huntin' er cock-tail to stiddy his nerves an' stan' de broad-side uv laugh an' fun dat ever' body poked at 'im.

"An' hit sho' changed 'im, fur er month afterwards I heurd 'im say to Miss Jinny: 'Darlin,' I fears I's neglected you uv late. Turn de chilluns over to de nurse an' we'll go to New 'leans nex' week an' heah Jinny Lind sing!' "

HOW UNCLE WASH RODE IN AN AUTOMOBILE

AS soon as I saw him I knew that something had been doing. I knew, too, that it had been done several weeks before, for, like an old breastwork after the battle, there were signs of rents and scars. He still wore some sticking plaster over his left eye, and a small bump was gradually hardening to ripeness behind the burr of his ear. But worst of all I saw his dignity had received a jolt—his faith a hard fall.

"Vanity uv vanities—all are vanities, boss, said de preacher long ago. I's herd it all my life an' preached on it forty times, but de full signifercashun uv de conternuity uv dat tex' jes' foun' er permerment habertashun in de habilerments of—"

He stopped to dodge the paper weight I threw at him.

"Cut that out and tell your tale. I heard you went to the Democratic Convention at Nashville," and I looked understandingly at his battered condition.

"Oh, yes, I went dar, but I didn't tarry long. I's been thru de war wid ole marster an' I kin smell er battle erfar off, de capt'ns an' de shoutin'. I kno' rifle pits when I see 'em an' walkin' arsenals an' de Rebble yell an' all de yuther signs dat tells de peacemaker dat now is his time to lay low an' inhabit de land, so I laid low.

"You see, Marse John Fry tuck me to Nashville wid er Cox badge on, gin me er drink at de Tulane Hotel

bar an' started me out. But befo' I hit de sidewalk sumpin happen'. Er red-faced feller from Shelby County cum at me wid er dirk in his teeth an' drawin' er gun wid bofe his yudder han's. Es nigh es I could make out whut he said, boss, wid his mouf full uv col' steel, it was to de effect dat I had on de wrong badge an' dat ef I didn't make er change certain things 'ud happen entirely detremental to de equanimerty uv my constertushun.

"'Marster,' sez I, erlookin' at my badge, plum 'stounded, fur it didn't take me long to see de proper s'lution uv eny problem when de question am put on to me dat p'intedly. 'Marster,' sez I, 'I am er po' ole nigger dat can't read, an' some frien' he decerated me wid de wrong colors. Uv co'se, I's fur yo' man—jes' pin yo' badge on de yudder side uv my coat. 'Hurrar for Patterson,' sez I, es soon as I fin' out whut his man's name wus.

"Dat tickle him so he tuck me in an' give me er drink. I tell you, boss, it don't take so much grace es it do agreement fur to inherit long life in dis worl' and etarnity in de nex'. De man dat agrees is de same dat is gethered to his fathers in er ripe ole age, an' de nigger dat 'sputes is de nigger dat is sooner buried!

"I went out and pin on me two mo' badges—one wus Marse Ned Carmack's, de yudder wus Marse Bob Taylor's, an' es I stalked out to de white man's armory at de contention hall, sez I, thank Gawd, I luv de whole wurl'!

"But one look at dat arsenal wus enuff. It reminded me uv de ole scalerwag days when we 'Publicans'

an' niggers useter hol' convenshun an' I got er dose uv it den dat lasted. Dar was two faxuns an' me an' anurr nigger wus on different sides an' wanted to control. So me an' dat nigger made er run fur to see which cud git de chair fus.' I got it—on de top uv my head —an' dat's why I ain't been in no convenshun sense an' dis one look too much lak de one I got de chair on de top uv my head. I wus on de way to Hot Springs fur my rumatizn an' so out I put, fur es I wus tellin' you I think I kno's rifle pits an' breastwucks when I sees 'em.

"I's allers contended, boss, dat de wurl' owes every man er livin' an' er good bath. I's had de livin' but I's neber had de bath, an' I heurd Hot Springs wus de place to git it, so I went, hopin' to c'wore my rumatizn.

"Dey are robbers, boss—rooms five dollars er day an' upwards an' baths extry. I sized up my bill an' I soon seed ef I tuck er room in a hotel I'd soon have mo' room in my stummick den I wanted, so I started out to git er dram, an' er room an' er free bath all fur nuthin', 'cept dat nachul instinc' which de good Marster gives to all dem dat inherit eternal sense.

"I seed er lot uv common folks, but I allers make it er p'int when I wants to get sumpin', to go whar it's at. You can't gether figs from thistles, nor ducets from dead ducks, nor do de po' white man an' de hill-billy ever carry much erroun' wid 'em. but er clear conshuns, er tin cup an' er belly full uv undue sur-pishuns.

"I soon seed de crowd I was er-huntin'—one uv dese dapper Yankee chaps, loaded wid money, an' out

for er lark an' er good chance to study de nigger questun down South. He's de kin' dat sees mo' to intrust him in a nigger's fun'ral den in a white man's resurrecshun.

"An' dat feller was sho' fixed, boss—he had ever'thing he wanted—plenty uv money, er bran'-new gas wagin, er bulldog, er big lunch basket, his own wife an' anurr man's wife! Oh, he wus sho' fixed right.

"I seed de basket fus' an' dat 'cided me I had hit my crowd.

" 'Marster,' sez I, takin' off my hat an' bowin' so low I mighty nigh spiled de ant nest I wus standin' on, wid de top my head. 'Marster, kin yer tell whar er ole nigger dat's walked all de way from Tennessee an' ain't got no letter uv interducshun, kin git er free bath fur his rumatizn?'

"De ladies laf' an' dey all got intrusted at once.

" 'From Tennessee?' sez he. 'Do yo' kno' er ole cullar'd gen'man down dar name Uncle Wash, dat we read so much about?'

" 'Marster,' sez I, bowin' erg'in, 'I has de honor to inform you dat you am now beholdin' dat same gen'man in proprior personee, as ole marster useter say.'

"It tickled him nearly to deaf. He winked at his own wife an' smile at de yudder man's wife, shakes my arm nearly off an' lef' er ten-dollar bill right spack bang in my han'.

" 'I'd ruther see you,' he sez ,'Mister Washin'ton, den ole King Solomon hisse'f.'

" 'An', Marster,' sez I, erbowin' erg'in 'you am mo' beholdin' to my sight den de Queen uv Sheba wus to dat are same Sollermun.'

" 'Aint' he er dandy?' he sez, winkin' at his own wife an' smilin' at de tuther one—'don't he talk nachul?'

" 'Thank you, Marster,' sez I erg'in, but winkin' at de bulldog—'but if you thinks I ta'k nachul you jes' orter see how nachul I eat.'

"Dey likin' die laffin' at dat, an' den dey open up dat lunch, champain an' ever'thing fur to eat. I wan't gwine eat wid dem white folks—I'd been raised wid manners' but when I seed dem fo'ks thort es much uv de bulldog es dey did uv deysels an' de man's wife call dey dorg Darlin' Dearie an' sot him up to dey lunch lak enybody, I knowed I wus good as dey wus.

" 'Marster,' sez I, 'dar am two things I's nurver been raised to eat wid—white fo'ks and dogs, so jes' han' mine out out to me.'

" 'Oh, nonsense,' sez de 'oman; 'Darlin' Dearie eats wid us all de time. You jes' orter see de clothes we got fur him when he need 'em. Come on, Mister Washin'ton, dat's er dear.'

" 'Mistis,' sez I, erbowin' low, 'be keerful how you fling yo' intitlements erroun'—dey lynches niggers in Tennessee fur less'n dat. No, Mistis, I ain't er deer, but I's jes' er plain ole buck nigger dat's been raised right. But if you all kin stan' de dorg you kin stan' me,' and wid dat I lit in, fur I wus sho' hongry. An' all de time I wus eatin' I wus tellin' 'em things so funny dat dey cudn't eat fur laffin'. Dat wus part uv my tackticks—all but dat dorg—he wus er low-lived dorg dat didn't have sense enuff to see de funny p'ints I wus makin', but jes' keep on eatin'. Ef it hadn' been fur him I'd got all dat lunch.

"Arter lunch nuffin' would do dat man but we mus' all ride in his gas wagin.

"Now, boss, dar's one thing I's allers hated—er gas wagin. Dey may be all right for white fo'ks, but I's allers had my doubt if dey wus es good es er mule for er nigger. 'Sides dat, my ole gran'manny wus er witch 'oman an when I wus born she se'd de signs se'd I mus' be keerfuf 'bout gas, dat it meant my death. Fur a long time I thort de ole 'oman meant I'd talk myse'f to death, but arter livin' to my age an' still kickin' I gin it up till I seed dis gas wagin. I knowed whut she meant den, ef I ever put my foot in it.

"I bucked an' begged, but it wan't no use. De man gin me anurr ten dollars an' sed to git in, dat he allers wanted to ride wid er celebracy, an' now wus de time. When I seen I had to I sed de prayers my mammy tort me an got in.

"He put me an' de bulldorg in de front seat uv hornor, as he calls it, an' de 'omen tittered an' laughin' and dey all wus happy but yo' Uncle Washin'ton. I was so skeered dat I cud raise de ha'r on de bulldorg's back by jes' lookin at him! De man teched er spring an' de thing se'd *kersook, kersok.*

" 'Say, mister,' I begged, 'lemme git out —dis hoss is got er bad case uv erperzootic. Hear 'im coughin?'

"Dey all laugh. 'No, no,' sez de 'oman, 'jes sit still.'

"Den de thing 'gin to quiver and twich his tail lak he wus fixin' to buck.

" 'Lemme bresh dem hoss flies off,' sez I. 'I's sho' he's fixin' ter run away.'

"Den de thing went *champ, champ, champ,* on de bit an' quiver an' sorter bucked an' started out *shee-chee-chee-chee-ee.*

" 'Bad wind!' sez I; 'you kin heah 'im blowin' er mile.'

"Wid dat we moved out smoother den melted lead runnin' over er red-hot stove lid.

" '*Kerhonk, kerhonk, kerhonk, kerkonk,*' it sed so close to me I jumped er foot high.

" 'Whut's de matter?' sez de man, an' all uv 'em even de bulldorg—laughed.

" 'I thort dis wus er hoss,' sez I, but I kno' dat voice am de voice uv er donkey. Dat's one thing I's never ride—let me out,' sez I.

"But we soon struck er good road an' wus sailin' so fas' I had to hol' my hat wid one han' an' my hair wid de yudder, but dat ar' bulldog he jes' seem to enjoy it.

"Jes' den I seed er big load uv white fo'ks comin' down der road to meet us. It wus er picnic uv country fo'ks loaded to de gunnels in dat wagin, wid two cock-yeared, skeery, fool mules er pullin'.

"*Honk! Honk!* De mules thort it wus Jedgment horn. I guess dey hadn't lived right, an' dey started back fur er safe spot. You kno' how er mule kin do it—be agwine north an' de nex' thing be gwine south. I seed six different kind uv country, home-made yarn stockings huntin' fur different longertudes an' latertudes; den I heard some tall cussin' frum de men fo'ks dat had been drivin', but wus now gittin' de sun outen dey eyes.

"Den our driver made one big mistake. He stopped

UNCLE WASH ON THE PANIC

"DE PANIC," said de old man to me the other night, "is er invenshun uv de white man to carry out some skeme uv his own. Why, dese here panics, Marse John, is as ol' as Ejup'. De Good Book tells uv er panic down dar when de lean swine et up de fat swine. Dar wus jes' es much money in Pharo's house den es befo'—it jes' went into its hole. Prosper'ty is lak er groun' hog—hit cain't stan' to see its shadder—hit skeers him. But it don' bothah us, Marse John, fur er nigger can stan' enything er white man can, an' eat er lot mo' things dan de white man nurver dreamed uv. Fac' is, nobody enjoys er panic lak er nigger or er po' white. Hit fetches things down whar we c'n reach 'em. Why, I's been eatin 'tuhkey reg'lar sence de panic, tuhkey an' spare ribs an' sausages an' beefsteaks. All uv 'em's now down to rock bottom, thank Gawd, an' I hopes dey'll stay down. Las' year tuhkeys brung twenty cents er poun' an' po' white fo'ks cudden' look at 'em. Now de farms uv Middle Tennessee is full of 'em at any ole price. An' hawg meat? Lawd! I'se greasy inside an' out!

"Panics is all right. I enjoys 'em. De good Marster put more'n enough here fur us all, an' when some uv you folks try to git it all into one barn or bin, an' let de res' uv de worl' starve, it gits de res' uv de worl' sorter suspishus, an' suspishun am de mother uv panics. Den arter you got all de po' fo'kses money in

yo' banks, you claps de lid on an' sets down on it, sayin':

" '*Have conferdunce, frien's! Have conferdunce! In Gawd we trusts!*' "

The old man laughed for a minute. "Dese bankers minds me uv er time, Marse John, when, I loans my bes' mule to er preacher nigger named Luke. Luke borrowed him to ride to er deestrick meetin' in West Marshall, but he nurver stop dar, but keep on wes'ward, as fur as I could l'arn by follerin' his trail to de Miss'ippi River. I gin up bofe Luke an' de mule es lost an' nurver heerd nothin' uv 'em fer ten years. Den one day I gits er letter f'um Luke down in de Pan Handle an' he say:

" '*Have conferdunce, brother, I'll be back soon an' return de mule I borrered. Have conferdunce! It am er godly virtue! Yo' brother in de Lawd, Luke.*'

"I still got de conferdunce an Luke's got de mule!

"Wy, Marse John, we don't need much money here. I's knowed one baked 'possum, dressed wid sweet taters, to wipe out de de'ts uv er whole nigger settlement betwix 'em. De fust nigger dat cotch it, an' dressed it an' cooked it don't have no trouble er-passin' it to de nex' in lickerdashun uv his debt—dat wus dead easy—speshully as ever' nigger wus hongry an' wanted it; an' when it got to me I et it, an'ever' body wus happy, all dey debts wus paid, an' dah wus plenty mo' 'possum in de woods. When dey seed how slick it wuck we 'cided f'um dat day in dat settlement we'd use baked 'possum es er mejum uv *ex*-change an' nobody nuver b'en hongry sence. Whut things we

raise we trades fur baked 'possums an' keeps gwine. Hit's er whole lot better'n dese here packin' house certiferkits dat dese here white fo'ks' conferdunce banks puts out.

"I went down to de bank de yudder day an' took one uv dem packin' house scrips erlong, an' begged Marse Joe to gin me some sho 'nuff money; but he tells me dat I didn't know whut I wus talkin' 'bout, dat my packin' house certiferkits wus er long ways better'n money.

" 'Ever dollar uv 'em,' sez he, 'is wuth er dollar an' er ha'f, de money bein' dar in de bank fer to show it.'

" 'Why, look,' sez he, 'it's better'n money, I tell you, kase ever one uv 'em represents er dollar an' er ha'f.'

" 'I tell you, Marse Joe,' sez I, 'they sho' is valuable But ef ever' dollar uv 'em is wuth er dollar an' er ha'f as you say, hit seem to me mighty keerless uv you not to keep 'em in de bank, an' let out dat ole no-count money!'

" 'Wal.' sez he, 'dis thing jes' had to come. But it'll prove to be er blessin' in disgize fur it'll make Congress do somethin'.'

" 'Yes, Marse Joe,' I sez, er scratchin' my head; *'but it pears lak you is settin' on de blessin'!'*

" 'Now heah, Wash,' said Marse Joe, 'I see you don't understan' dis, an' I want all my bank customers, black an' white, to see jes' how it is. Now heah, it's dis way: Dese stificates is better'n money. You comes heah with yo' check fur five dollars. I gives you two dollars in money, and three dollar in

stificates which is worth mo' dan de money. Now see?'

"'Yes, Marse Joe,' sez I, 'I see—it dis erway: I goes to feed my ole hoss to-night. He's had nothin' to eat all day. I gives him two nubbins uv cohn an' then I hangs up in his hay rack er b'utiful chromo picture called *Bringin' in de Sheaves* fur him to look at. Dat orter satisfy eny hoss,' sez I, 'orten it?'

"But Marse Joe didn't see de p'int."

The old man thought a while, laughing gently.

"Dat minds me uv Br'er Pete. Why, Marse John, er baked 'possum is not only de bes' mejum uv exchange in de wurl', but I's knowed one uv 'em to raise de dead! You think I's jokin' but I ain't, es I kin prove by ever niggah in our settlement dat seed me raise dat dead nigger.

"Endurin' de wust uv de panic uv sebenty-three, Br'er Pete, er contrairy nigger dat wus allers hongry, an' allers dun jes' whut nobody else 'ud do, 'fused to jine wid us in our 'possum *ex*change skeme, bein' too lazy to hunt 'possum an' too contrairy to wuk in harness, an' havin' nothin' to eat, he kep' er-gittin' weaker an' weaker twell he jes' nachally died.

"I knowed how hongry he wus befo' he died, so 'stidder buryin' him de fus' day lak his widder wanted us to do (fur she knowed Pete wus diff'unt, an' she'd b'en feedin' him er long time, she said, an' she didn' wanter take no risks), I 'suaded 'em to let me try my han' on Pete. Wal, we laid him out an'de niggers come fur miles to set up wid de cawpse. Ef dar is enything er nigger laks to do, hit is to set up wid er

cawpse an' go to er fun'ral. Why, I's knowed meny an' meny er niggah to die jes' to see how big er fun'ral he could have! An' so dey wus all dar fur to set up wid Pete. Niggers dat hadn't spoke to Pete fur ten years, niggers dat had beat him in chicken an' dog trades, niggers dat had hoodooed an' stole his fence rails, niggers dat wanted his wife, niggers dat had lied erbout him in de chu'ch, all wus dar, so sorry an' yet so sati'fied.

"You couldn' see Pete fur de gloom in dat room, he bein' nachelly black. Now, fo' I went over, I had er nice young 'possum baked sweet an' brown in de middle uv steamin' hot yaller yam taters. Over all dis I had poured fresh butter gravy mixed wid er little barbycue sauce uv vinegar an' pepper an' big, white inguns. Dis poured over hot, raised er insense dat made mighty nigh ever nigger dar drop dead wid Pete.

" 'Now, brethern an' sistren,' sez I, es I fotched de 'possum in in er big, ole-fashion' stew pan, er-steamin' an' er-splutt'rin' an' de 'possum fat sizzlin', an' de taters sorter coughin', 'I's allus know'd dat de hair uv de dawg wus good fur de bite. Br'er Pete, as you-all know, died uv er panic an' privashun, also uv bein' too hongry an' headstrong, er lesson fur ever' nigger heah, dat in time uv panic we'd bettah all pull togethah, hit bein' no time fer 'speriments wid yo' stummicks. Knowin' how hongry he wus when he died an' whilst he lived, I's er-gwine to see ef I kain't fetch him to life erg'in wid de same medicine, fur I don't b'leebe eny uv Pete's orgins is out uv j'int, speshully his eatin' orgins, es his sorrowin' widder will testify when

Pete wus in his usual health an' appytite. An' whilst you-all sing dat good ole hymn:

'De fat uv my possesshuns rise
Up in de nostrils uv de skies,'

" 'I's er-gwine to try er little 'speriment on Pete dat'll raise him 'frum de daid ef enything dis side uv Gabri'l's hawn kin do it. Jes' all stan' erside f'um erroun' de bed an' gin me air an' elbow room.'

"I raised de winder so de air 'ud blow ercrost him. Dar he laid, dead as er 'Publican canderdate in Texas an' colder'n de bunions on Marse Fairbankses' toes. I felt uv 'im an' I knows. It was er fall night an' only middlin' cool, but Lawd, Marse John, when I touched him, he wus so daid an' cold he turned de hair oil I put on my haid inter taller!

"I larned den dat er nigger dyin' uv honger dies deader an' colder dan enybody.

"But I had er 'bidin' faith dat Pete wus still hongry an' faith is de principullest thing in wuckin' miracles!

"I sot dat steamin' stewin' pan on his chist, in his folded arms, so de win' would waft de scent ercrost his face:

" 'Now, bretherin an 'sistren,' sez I, 'all jine in de hymn an' gin de 'possum time to wuck.'

"And den I led out, givin' it out two lines at er time an' all uv em er-follerin':

'De fat uv my possesshuns rise
Up in de nostrils uv de skies.'

"I stop an' look at Pete. De hot 'possum steam wus er-rollin' ercrost his face, but he wus still daid. I led erg'in:

'De steam uv incense it am sweet,
Arise, my soul, dis scent to meet!'

"Still no sign f'um Pete, so I led erg'in:

'My houngry stummick yearns to see
A taste uv dis divinity!'

"Pete didn't move, but I see de res' uv de congregashun wus tur'bly 'fected. Dat 'possum wouldn't er b'en dar two minits ef er cawpse hadn't er helt it.

"I led erg'in, thinkin' I'd git er little more 'splicit:

'What am de grejunts uv dis stew
On what I stakes my faith ernew.'

"Nuffin' f'um Pete:

'Possum cotch in a 'simmon tree,
Gray an' fat es he kin be.'

"Dey all follered—dey moufs, lak dey eyes, waterin.'

'Cooked wid 'taters, gravy brown,
Inguns wid melted butter roun'—'

"Den, bless heaben! I seed de en' uv Pete's nose 'gin to wuck, jes' er little, lak er rabbit snuffin' gyarden truck.

"I fairly lif' de roof off wid de nex' lines:

'Rise my soul, dese 'taters sweet,
Rise an' eat uv 'possum meat!'

"Marse John, I over-done it. Fo' I could say *Amen,* I seed Pete's mouth 'gin to wuck, his eyes flew opin, he sot up in de bed, whilst ever nigger dar turned summersets out'n dat doo', an' some uv 'em am er-runnin' yit!

"But Pete an' me, we et de 'possum!"

HOW BIGBYVILLE WENT DRY.

"I SEES er good deal uv talk in de papers now erdays 'bout gamblin' on hoss races, an' I sees dey 'bout ter pass laws ter brake up de habit," remarked Uncle Wash the other night, after he had brought a turn of wood in to the library, and, having built a crackling fire, sat passing his hands through the leaping blaze. "But I don't see no use uv all dat hurraw fur nuthin.' Bettin' am one uv de orgernal sins uv de yunerverse. Ever' thing we do am er hazzard, frum ketchin' er microbe ter er wife. Why, we falls in luve jes' lak we falls down de stair steps—all er chance—an' one uv em 'bout es bad es de yurther. Befo' we bawn de chances am jes' even dat we'll be er gal baby—jes' accident we ain't. Es we grow up we liabul ter be knocked out by de measels or de whoopin' coff, or choked ter deaf on er chicken gizzard; an' ef we happens ter 'scape dese we mighty nigh sho' ter drap by de roadside in pollertics or matrimony! I tell you sah, life am er big chance from de doctah's fus' visit to de undertaker's, an' jes' es likely to turn on de size uv de hat our grandaddy wore es eny thing else. An' es fur bettin' on er hoss race," said the old man, getting excited, "hit's jes' er nachul way uv lettin' off sum uv de surplus chance-steam dat's in our bilers. Bless yore life, sah, I'll bet I's bin ter mo' hoss-races den eny yuther man in Tennessee, startin' back to de days uv Haynie's Maria, Double Head, Rachel

Jackson, an' de swift Paytona, up to de times uv Procter Knott an' Hal Pinter, an' I yuster allers put up er dollar ef I seed my way cl'ar, an' nurver did lose no big thing twell I quit bettin' on hosses an' run up ergin ernudder combinashun up in Bigbyville way back in de fortys. Dat cuor'd me, an' I ain't nurver bet sence.

"You see, sah, my ole Marster yuseter bet on hoss races nachul es he chaw terbaccer. Es de Marster is, so am de servants, so am de chillun, so am de wife, so am de mudder-in-l— no, no," he said quickly, "I lacter made er break right dar. Wal, enyway, my ole Marster yuseter bet an' run hosses, an' when I wus bawn on de plantashun I jus' wus bawn wid it in my lungs. Befo' I cud rid er hoss I played marbles fur keeps, stole watermillions fur fun, an lied kase I couldn' help it. Dat wus de fix I wus nachully in 'twell I made dat bet dat Sat'dy evening, fifty years ergo.

"Dar wus er feller run er bar-room in Bigbyville den, named Sid Thompson, an' he had er fightin' dorg named Jack—er little de meanes' dorg you ever did see. He'd whipped every dorg fur ten miles erround an' got de naburhood uv dorgs so tarrified dat you cudden't git er country dorg ter cum inter town, dey all wus so 'feard uv him. Den Jack gotter playin' tricks on 'em. I hope-I-may-die if he didn't yuseter lay out on de porch an' play lak he wus sound ersleep, but all de time keepin' one eye open fur eny friendles' lookin' cur-dorg dat mout be passin' humbly by—an' den jump out on him, give 'im er double-spiral circlin' twist uv er shake, an' den set down on his tail an' sorter laff

es he watched dat tarrified dorg go yelpin' up de rode fleeing from de wrath ter cum. Jack wus er bob-tail dorg,—born dat way. He wus so mean nachur kno' he wuddn't need no tail ter wag, so she didn't give 'im eny. Nachur, I have noticed, allurs economizes an' nurver givs us eny thing we don't need—but bless yore sole, honey, how often does she also fail to give us er few uv de things dat's most essenshul to our welfare.

"Havin nuffin' ter do, an' bein' bragged on 'twell he got de big haid, Jack got ter be de meddlesumes dorg in de wurl, an' soon gotter tendin' to everybody's business but his own. He went to all de fun'rals, an' yuster take de las' look at de deceased. He went to every camp-meetin' an' whenever de song started up, he'd howl 'twell dey would had ter take him out—thinkin' he wus sum city quire got out in de country. But de whole country bragged on his fightin' qualities, though dey lamented de lak uv his moral character. I's allers noticed, sah, dat genius however depraved allers gets de fus' seat at de table uv public erpinion. Wy, sah, de preachers even yuseter brag on dat dorg an' hold him up es er sample uv gifted meanness, long wid Tom Paine, Caterline and Benedic Arnold—men uv great erbility but lackin' in de one p'int worth all de res'. He's owner hed up er standin' bet Jack cud whup enything in hide er hair dat went on fo' legs—an' hit looked lak nobody'd ever take 'im up.

"One day dar cum ter Bigbyville de fus' monkey an' Italian I ever seed. De whole village turned out ter see 'em—Syd Thompson, Jack, an' all. De man he played de organ an' de monkey he dance, an' Jack he

sorter looked on, mad lak, 'cause enything 'ud tract mo' 'tenshun dan hisse'f. He sorter bristle up pretty close to de monkey, an' Syd said:

" 'Say, heah, Mistah, look out fur yo' monkey—ef Jack jumps on him he'll eat 'im up."

"Monkey noo' fraid e dog,' said de man, 'e whip de dog."

"Everybody laffed at dis, an' Syd said:

"Why, man, Jack would shake dat monkey like er rat."

" 'Noo, 'no shake 'im lak e rat—monk he whip de dog,' said de man.

"Dis made Syd so mad he tell de Italian he bet him all he hed de dorg cud kill de monkey in five minutes. But de Iterly man wus game an' he soon fotch out frum er ole belt 'round his waste mo' gold den Bigbyville hed ever seed, an' told us we cu'd all cum in an' help rob 'im ef we wantd to.

"We wus plum thunderstruck. Dat little thing whip Jack? But we thout we jes well have er fool's money es enybody, an' de bar-keeper mor'gaged evry thing he hed to put up on de fight. De whole town got stirred up. Everybody, even sum uv de folks dat nurver did bet befo', an' dat preached ergin de immorality uv it, now thout dey jes' well make er little on er dead-sho' thing es eny body. I wus gwine'ter git married Sad'day night an' ole Marster hed give me fifty dollars to git fixed up wid. Dar was my chance, an' I put hit all up. De fight wus ter cum off de naixt day in de back yard uv de grocery sto', an' dat evenin' sum uv de boys drawed er picture an' put hit on de

post offis door. Hit represented er great big dorg shakin' er po' little monkey ter deaf, an' under hit wus writ:

"De End Uv De Sucker."

"Dis sot de whole town to laffin' hit wus so funny, an' de naixt day we wus all on han'—mighty nigh all Bigbyville—to back up Jack. De constable wus de stakeholder, an' we all felt mighty sorry fur de Italian an' de po' leetle monkey in his spike-tail coat an' cap. But de bar-keeper said dat er sucker wus bawn ever minit an' de lam's wus made fur ter be fleeced an' we all laft—all but de monkey. He jes' winked his eye an' said nuffin'.

"When we opened de gate Jack was sound ersleep on er pile uv leaves in de corner uv de back lot. We wanted to wake him up, but Syd said:

" 'Nurver mind; jes' fling de monkey in; Jack will enjoy his bre'kfas' after er good nap,' an' de Italian stooped down, unbuckle his chain, whispered sumpin' in de monkey's year, p'inted to Jack snoozin' erway in de corner an' turned him loose. De leetle fellow slipped over de ground 'twell he got to three feet uv de boss dorg, den he jumps on 'im widout eny noise, grabs Jack's stump uv er tail wid bofe uv his hans, sticks it in his wide mouf an' fotch his teeth together on hit lak er wolf trap.

"Marse John, you's heurd dat electric batteries wus invented about 1860, ain't you? Dat am er mistake. I seed de fus' one dat ever wus—right dar; an' Jack riz wid it on his tail. 'Round an' 'round he

turned in his mizry, tryin' to shet de current off, but de holt wus too close, an' as de mizry got wusser an' wusser he jes' laid back his years an' went round dat lot raisin' er whirlwind uv leaves. Torrectly he seed de gate ha'f open an' made er break fur it, knockin' me down, fur I wus too 'stonished ter git outen de way, an' den es we all looked down de road de las' we ever saw uv de champion dorg he wus flyin' to'ards de settin' sun wid er pa'r uv spike-coattails settin' off his hind end fur wings. Erbout er half hour afterwards de monkey cum trottin' on back, an' added de final weight uv wretchedness to our mizry by handin' 'round his leetle cap—es if we hadn't already paid fur de exerbition.

"Wal, sah, you cudder kerried all Bigbyville home dat night in yore vest pocket. Syd made er grate bluff an' tried ter claim er foul, sayin' Jack nurver did wake up, dat he was dreamin',—dreamin' de devil hed 'im by de tail, an' all dat. But de constable wus hones' an' es he handed over all de money dar wus in de town to de Italian, he 'lowed dat 'kordin' to his opinion Jack was de wides' erwake dorg he ever did see, but dat ef he wus dreamin' he only hoped he'd live ter see de day when he'd have er race hoss dat cud dream ha'f es fast.

"Boss dat busted up de whisky bizness in de town, fur Syd moved erway. I didn't git marrid fur er year, an' wooder bin single yit ef de gal hadn't tuck pitty on me an' 'lowed she'd have me jes' es I wus."

"Fur I Was to 'stonished to Git Outen de Way."

UNCLE WASH ON GAMBLING

"GAMBLIN', Marse John is puffickly nachul! Dar now!" as he recovered himself from falling over my setter dog, which, after a hard day's hunt, lay stretched out before the library fire—"dat wus er chance dat I didn't break my neck over dat oblivermus dawg! Ain't dat gamblin'?"

The setter rapped his tail on the floor and slept on, and the old man, after giving the dog a lecture on not knowing where to lie down and be out of the way, went on as he poked up the fire:

"I see er whole lot 'bout de way you white fo'ks is misbehavin' yo'se'f dese days er-gamblin' and er-robbin' one nur'r. Uv co'se er niggah cain't gamble—he jes' plays craps es nachul es er groun' hawg smells strong. To gamble, er man must have money an' be 'spectabul an' so when he steals it's jes' *'bezzlemint.* But when you gits down to it gamblin's nachul. Nachur started de game fust, an' whut's de use uv goin' erg'in nachur? Ef you don't pattern after her you'll mighty likely wind up wid sumpin' wuss dat'll stick crossways in yo' craw.

"How kin I say dat? Chile, you sho' ain't studied out de question much!

"Ever'thing is er chance in life wid de odds all erg'in you!

"Wy, de ve'y d'ciples uv de Lawd cast lots as to which shu'd have his coat.

"But de whole trouble wid de times now in gamblin'

—high finance dey calls it—runnin' all th'oo ever'thing dat could be watered, milked or squeezed!

"An' de funny thing wid you white fo'ks is dat in ever' big wrong, dat needs rightin', you pick out some little ole thing to make it er scapegoat fur all de res'. You pick out er nigger crap shootin', or er moonshiner makin' er little licker widout revenue, whilst society games go on even 'mongst de ladies, an' ever' bum barkeeper in de lan' cheats Uncle Sam out uv three-fourths uv his revenue, by addin' dat much water, high wines an' other pizens to de licker he sells.

"You's barred hoss racin', where men ease dey min's by playin' er few dollars an' go home an *bee*have, whilst Wall Street sharks gamble, on de insurance money uv de widders uv de lan'!

"I's lived wid white fo'ks all my life, an' ef I wus axed whut wus de stranges' thing erbout 'em I have to say *dey have er 'spectable name fur ever' big sin an' damnashun fur ever' little one*!

"No, sah er little hones' gamblin' is healthy. It he'ps make brains an' good jedgment, quick thinkin' an' cool haids, all de way frum de farmer dat puts in de early crops to gamble on de early rains to de brainy chap dat sees de comin' city in his cawn fiel's.

"No—no, I don't see no use in all dis hurrah 'gin er little hones' gamblin'. Too much piuserty ain't good fur de breedin' uv de race. Dirt ain't considered nice but we all got to eat our peck uv it to be real men. Sturilized babies all die wid de fust good stomach ache. Too much pi'usness breeds hippercrits. You gotten to take yo' chance in life, fur it's all er big

chance. You may play erroun' an' think you is er-drivin' de chances wid er good rein, but de chances is er-drivin' you.

"Did I ever tell you 'bout de time I played hoss an' run er race fur stakes? I wus er young nigger den an' great Scotts, how I could run! Ole Marster 'spishioned I had speed frum meetin' me accidentally one moonlight night in his watermilion patch. He wus lef' at de post an' seed nothin' but my back—dat's all dat saved my hide, but he '*spishioned* I had speed, as I wus sayin'!

"He found it out fur shore one night when he sent me to town in er hurry 'tendin' lak he needed some medicine quick an' tole me to take de shortes' rout home or he'd lambas' me. De shortes' rout, cuttin' off er mile, wus th'oo de fambly grave yard, an'dar dat mischeevus leetle Marse Henry uv his'n had dressed up lak er ghos' an' got behin' er tomb es I come by. It wus jes' one hundred an' fifty yards frum dar to de picket fence, an Marster said I stepped de distance in jes' 'leben seconds flat, 'sides jumpin' clear uv de palin's an' levin' mos' uv my garments on de pickets.

"Frum dar, he said, I run de mile home in jes' 1:59 1-4.

" 'It wus jes' er little 'speriment, Wash,' ole Marster laff an' say, es he gin me er good toddy when I got back to de settin' room. 'I 'spishioned you had speed, an' I knowed many er good horse lak Haley's Halliburton, fust discovered it wid er good skeer. You'll do,' sez he erg'in, laughin' t'well he nearly fell out'n de cheer, 'an' I's gwine to win some Krismus money on

you, an' beat Judge Burton's sprintin' hill-billy he allus braggin' erbout.'

" 'Master,' sez I, as he give me er rum toddy, 'don't you think you better have me blanketed arter dat heat—I feel lak I done throwed two curbs now.'

"So Marster winked an' called in two mulatter niggers whut tended to his hosses an' tell em to rub me down an' blanket me an' gin me de fat uv de lan.'

Frum dat night I wus great. I had two niggers to wait on me, exercise me, rub me down an' git me in speed shape. I made 'em put er silk halter on me—I wouldn't come out'n de stall lessen dey did—an' when I did prance out er-snortin' to run down de orchard track fer exercise ever' day, an' sho whut I could do, it wus lined wid pretty yaller gals an' pickaninnies all er-singin:

" '*See, de konkrin' hero comes.*'

"I allus did b'leeve dat de white fo'ks orter let er nigger have es many wives es he pleases (fur he's gwine to have 'em anyway!) an' dat wus one time I cu'd er married all de yaller gals on two plantations!

"De race wus to come off de Sat'd'y befo' Krismus, down de principullest street in de town, to be followed by er tuckey an' beef shootin' an' sum udder little sport. In dem days white fo'ks wa'nt so squeamish—dey wucked hard, fit, cleared de lan', raced horses, shot fur beef, married when dey got ready, drunk licker ef dey wanted it, had fun when dey c'u'd, an' fights when dey c'u'dn't, an' died 'spectabul when de time cum, ef dey didn't die befo' dat.

"Now it's all wuck, no fun, no fight, an' ever'body preachin'!

"It may be best but it ain't breedin' *men*, Marse John!

" 'Citement run high. It wus de talk uv de country, dis race 'tween Kunnel Young's nigger Wash an' Slim Jim Coon—de hill-billy backed by Judge Burton. Marster had up er hundred on me erg'inst Judge Burton's hundred on de hill-billy. O, dey bet lak gem'men—special' in dem ole times. But all de time he seed dat I wus hard es er hound's rib, rubbed down to er muscle an' bone an' dat my toe nails want trimmed—for it wus er bar'foot race down de public road, an' Marster laff an' say *ef I could git er good skeer and plenty uv toe-holt, all hell couldn't beat me!*

"De trainin' wus er leetle hard twixt de rubbin' an' de runnin', an' Marse wouldn't let 'em give me no whisky, terbacco, coffee er' sugar—an' dat wus hard —jes' whey milk an' oatmeal. It sho' wus indiffunt fodder, livin' es I had b'en on beefsteak an' cawn-pone!

"I never seed Slim Jim till de day uv de race. De whole male 'swasion uv de country wus dar, black an' white. De town marshal wus de starter, three country squires wus jedges, an' de track wus in de main street an' harried hard an' good.

"I seed den whar my toe-holt 'ud come in.

"I wus sho' proud uv my app'intment. I went dar under er red blanket, pejammers, satin slippers, an' er silk halter. But when Marster had me stripped fur de race, I didn't have on nothin' but er fig leaf an' er halter —*an' he pulled off de halter!* He said he wanted me

to run lak my ancestors useter run when de ghos' uv er g'rilla got after 'em in de woods uv Africa!

"It wus de bigges' day uv my life. De boys dat wanted to play de races would come an' look me over, an' den I ac' hoss to puffecshun. I'd snort, paw de air, kick at ever'body dat come too nigh, an' you never seed sech bettin' as wus put up! Whole hatfuls uv knives, pistols, watches—ever'thing dey had—silver dollars up in leetle piles all up an' down de sidewalk.

"Wal, sah, arter lookin' us all over, de wurd soon come dat I wus de fav'rit', an' dey said ever'thing wus jes' piled on me.

"All but de hill-billies, dey bet on Slim Jim.

"I felt mighty proud an' 'tarmined to run my best.

" 'Bout dat time dar come to me er little, flashy-dressed, tin-horn gambler—de same dat has made hoss racin' pestiferous in de lan' twell all decent fo'ks is erg'in it.

"He tempted me lak de sarpent tempted Adam an' lak Adam, I fell, Marse John, I sho' did.

"Well, Marse John, him an' me, we hilt er earnest conversashun, an' when he slipped back, I had two hundred dollars uv his money, which I calc'lated would pay back Marse de hundred he'd loose on me, him bein' de only one I wus uneasy about *an' dat chiefly on account uv my hide!*

"Den Mister Tin Horn bet erg'in me to beat de worl'.

"Wal, long little befo' noon, de time come. Ole Marster drove me down to de track in his buggy, me wid my scarlet blanket, an' my black hide shinin' out lak er lookin' glass. De streets wus jes' crowded wid

er long line uv yellin', jos'lin' men, an' boys scootin' 'bout betwixt dar laigs, an' m'latter gals, an' sum uv 'em throwed flowers inter my buggy—Lawd! Lawd! Marse John."

The old man broke off reminiscently, rubbed his hands softly down my setter's back, as the gaudy vision floated into his heart again.

"Slim Jim wus done dar. I never seed sich er white man in all my bawn days. Now I wus mod'rate built fur runnin', an' I had muscles bulgin' out all over my body, I t'ink dey mus' er been er streak uv de Norman in me somewhere; but dat Slim Jim! Why, Marse John, dat man Slim Jim, mus' suttinly b'en er cross twixt er jack rabbit an' er grasshopper. He wus jes' a pair uv laigs j'ined togedder wid er po'-white hide. I looked him over, an' de crowd looked him over, an' den when I jumps out'n de buggy, an, th'ows off my scarlet robe, de crowd looks me over, an' den sich yellin'! You see, dey wus countin' on de muscles on my arms an' chist to he'p me erlong in runnin'.

"Men would come erroun' an' punch an' thump me, an' I'd shy, an' kick, an' froth at de mouf, an' de niggah dat Marster had 'p'inted would juk at my halter, an' say, *'Quiet now, Wash. Slow down ol' hoss, you'se gwinter git on de track mighty shawtly.'* Den he'd pat me on de haid an' I'd th'ow up my haid an' look out uv my eyes wild lak; an' dem mulatter gals—I sho' thought dey'd have fits er-laffin'. Ever'-body wus 'mused.

"Well, sah, de 'citement got in my blood, an' 'fo' goodness! I jes' begin to wish I hadn't took dat Tin

Horn's two hundred. I felt lak I'd ruther have dat race dan any two hundred dat ever wus coined.

"Me beat 'fo' all dese pussons? I jes' couldn't stan' de thought!

"Last we wus lined up, me an' Slim Jim. 'Way down yander stretched de road jes' ez level an' smooth ez de road to distruckshun. On both sides dar wus people lookin' up our direcshun—er long line uv haids, turned to'des us, wid er occasional flutt'rin han' kerchief, or de roses in some yaller gal's han's.

"I never saw de sun so bright in all my life.

"We stood dar all scrooched over lak Marster showed me. I could feel ever' muscle in my body jes' waitin to git to wuck. Slim Jim wus bent up lak er steel spring, too. De crowd wus tiptoein' an scrougin'.

"Sudden like—*Bang!* went de Judge's pistol.

"Hol' myse'f in! Fo' de Lawd, I thought I wus er hoss! Min' dat two hundred fur goin' slow? I tell you, Marse John, I tucked dis haid down an *f-l-e-w.* I jes' kinder seed er blur on both sides uv me as I passed de people. I could heer er lot uv whoopin' an' hollerin' somewhar—I didn't know whar. I wus es' tearin' up de yeth.

"All at once I hear er yellin', "*Slim Jim! Slim Jim! Slim Jim!*" An' den I looked up.

"An' would you b'lebe it, Marse John, dar was dat fool Slim Jim, Kinder lopin' 'long in front uv me, jes' sorter driftin' erlong lazy lak, an' lookin' roun' grinnin' back at me, lak he wus out fur er little jog trot. '*Hurry up,' sez he, 'you fool nigger! What you loafin' fur.*'

"Hit made me mad. 'Gosh,' sez I, 'I'll ketch dat

blame greyhoun' ef hit breaks my back,' an' I let out er couple uv loops in my gait an' fairly heated de track wid my speed.

"I 'pro'ched him some, when wid er swat uv sickly grin at me, Slim Jim turned his haid down de track an' sorter shook me into de distance behin' him, an hones', Marse John, I had to look erroun' at de crowd to see whedder I was movin' er stan' in'still!

"Den de mos' erstonishin' thing happened: Jes' es dat long, keen racer wus er-crackin' de atmosphere, he stubbed his toe, 'bout half way down de track, an' he rolled over an' over fur 'bout er hundred yards faster'n I could run to save my neck. Befo' he had picked hisse'f up, I had passed him, an' felt onst more dat I wus about de fastest thing dat ever paced er quarter.

"*Den I thought uv dat two hundred!*

"I thought quick an' I acted quick. I knowed Slim Jim never stump his toe, case I never seed er jack rabbit stump his toe in all my days. *Slim Jim had sold out, too!*

"I thought quick an' acted quick. All uv er studdint, I begun caperin' 'cross de track, broke my gait, kicked out my heels, an' es good luck had it, er piece uv newspaper come blowin' 'cross de street, dat somebody had dropped—an' my, you orter seed me shy at de thing! I jes' cavorted. Th'owed up my haid an' neighed—turned roun, lef' de track an' went hell-bent to ole Marster's stables, an' I didn't stop twell I got dar!

"An' I carried dat two hundred wid me—de gift uv de Tin Horn to de lost cause."

"But I don't understand," I began.

The old man laughed.

"Wal, maybe not. But don't you see—bein' es we wus bofe bought out, an' Slim Jim's fake fall, an' me boltin' de track, de race wus off, nobody won, an' de fools dat bet on bofe sides wus saved, all but de Tin Horn dat bought me. I had his two hundred, an' Marster said it served de Tin Horn gambler right—*everthing bein' fair in er steal.*

"'But I's sorry," sez he, "to see de sport uv gentlemun ruined by cheap gamblin'."

HOW UNCLE WASH MARRIED THE WIDOW

THE old man had been so comfortably fixed of late that I had not bothered about him. I had heard vague rumors of his wealth—how that he owned a forty-acre farm, with a good home—well stocked, and that he lorded it over the dusky citizens of Dark Bottom—a very Croesus.

I had even heard that he had married again—the thirteenth time—and to a handsome yellow widow who came into Dark Bottom from Alabama and taught the district school and played on the church organ. There was a hot rivalry for the organist it is said, lasting from potato-planting and culminating to white heat during the dog-days; that every young darky in the district wanted her, but that the old man won out; that now he drove around in splendor, lived like a lord, looked twenty years younger, had the buxomest and fattest saddle-colored wife in the state and had taken a new lease on life.

But what astonished me more was the rumor that the old man owned a dozen darkies himself—in plain violation of the law of the land and the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

I imagined, naturally, that the Alabama widow had had something to do with all this, but not having seen the old man lately I was anxious for a report.

All the earthly possessions he had, two years ago, besides a kidney plaster for his back, some eel-skin

garters and a suit of old clothes, was an old Hal mare, with a long pedigree and a short lease on life, which a local butcher had given him rather than destroy her. She had been drawing his delivery wagon for ten years, had run away regularly in the full of every moon, and had finally splintered her hocks in kicking at a preacher who had stopped her driver in the middle of the pike to argue on the sin of horse racing.

It was a pretty day and nearing Christmas. I knew the old man would be over soon, knowing that I always had a present for him in the shape of a quart of Cascade and a pound of Navy Twist.

It is the unexpected that happens, and my surprise was great. He came, but instead of shambling down the pike in the ragged suit of old clothes, he drove up in a rubber-tired trap, drawn by a pair of bays. He wore a silk hat, a new Prince Albert suit, sported a gold-headed cane, and had three darkies to wait on him. Two sat in front to drive while a footman sat behind. They ran in ages from twelve to eighteen and were smart-looking yellow fellows. On the seat with him were two big bronze gobblers.

"In the name of heaven, old man!" I exclaimed as I met the turnout at the door, "but I thought you were the Sultan of Sulu coming after my cook."

He gave me a wink as much as to say that he was on his dignity, and then stepped grandly down, the footman assisting him with great deference. The two in front soon reached the horses' heads and stood eyeing the old man as if afraid to bat their eyes.

"Howdee do Marse John—to be sho'—glad to see you. Come, nigger, bresh me off. Step lively, now! Dar, get de dust offen my shoes—be pe'art."

"Why, Wash," I began, "what is all this?"

He waved his hands grandiloquently. "Don't mention it—don't mention it, sah. Them am my Chauncey DePew, Plowden Van Bibber an' Micajah Somerset—all niggers uv mine. Step lively dere, boys, an' tek dem turkeys in to Miss Mary, I fotcht 'em to her for er Christmas gift—thou't she'd lak 'em," he added to me.

"Why, she'll be delighted," I began again.

"Don't mention it—don't mention it, boss, it's my time to give now—you's bin kin' nuff to me. Don't mention it, 'tall."

"Will you come in?" I asked meekly, at the same time wondering if I had a room in the house fine enough for him.

"To be sho'—to be sho'—dat's what I come fur—to come in. What yo' reckin I'd make dem niggers drive me ten miles fur, if it wa'nt jes' to see you an' have an' ole time talk? Here, Plowden Van Bibber, fetch me dat bundle, it's er leetle present fur yo, Marse John."

In the library I offered him the best chair by the fire. He wiped his silk hat and laid it gently down, parted his coat-tail and took his seat.

I had not yet recovered my breath, and not knowing what to do, I got out his Christmas present.

"Thankee, Marse John, to be sho', thankee. But I's focht you all er presen'—er quart uv club cocktail,

extry old—an' er box uv fine cigars. I fin' dese things suit de ole man's stomach-sake better'n er cob pipe an' crude licker—so I's usin' 'em now."

He set them out with a majestic wave of his hand—the merest trifle.

"Great heaven!" I gasped—"drinkin' this kind of stuff an' ownin' darkies, too?"

The old man laughed. "You kno' I's allers wanted to own er few niggers ever since I remember how happy ole Marster an' me useter be wid 'em. I's allers thou't dey ought to be some land whar er gem'man cu'd own er few niggers an' it ud be nobody's bizness, but I nurver thou't I'd be dat forchunit myse'f."

"How did you get them, then?"

"Marri'd 'em—boss—an' dey's jes' eight or ten mo' on 'em—some gals, too—all likely en' peart—not to mention dey mammy—de widder dat wus. But she ain't er widder no mo'—neither grass nor sod. Ay, yas, I b'leeves I will try dat cock-tail—it hepes me pow'ful—can tell you all erbout it better."

He wiped his mouth on a silk handkerchief and went on: "You see, it all come erbout through dat ole Hal marr—Lord bless her!—It was her colt dat done de bizness. Las' Jinuwary er year ergo I 'suaded er Yankee gem'man dat stopped over at C'lumbia on his way to Fluridy for his health—an', lak all sech, he had mo' money dan he had hoss sense—dat de only thing dat lay between him ownin' de champ'yun pacer uv de universe an' me ownin' him was jes' de pittiful little sum uv fo' thousan' dollars uv his frenzied finance, an', boss, he gin it up so easy—lak he thou't it wus

unbranded wet goods, an' he was afeared some New-nited States rivernue officer would find 'em in his possesshun."

"Oh, that explains it—but I thought you had married it with that thirteenth wife—"

"Marse John," said the old man, sadly, "ain't you done live long enuff to kno' dat er po' devil wid one hoss got erbout es much chance to marry er rich widder es er Dimmycrat baby has to be President some day? No, sah, I put dat money in er good farm wid er pritty leetle home—jes' de kinder trap to ketch de bird I wus arter—an', altho' dey was er dozen young niggers arter her, pickin' de light catarrh an' blowin' sonnets to de moon, she 'lowed dey all look to her mighty lak dey had cold feet compared to dat farm an' home."

He chuckled—delighted. He rubbed his hands and took another cocktail.

"Oh, I was in fine fix for matrermony—er crib full uv cohn, twenty likely shoats, cows, chickens, pum'kins, taters, an' no tech uv de rumatizn in my back. I knowed she'd had several husban's befo'—some on 'em dead an' some runnin' fer de Legislatur an' some on 'em runnin' on Pullman cars. She nuver tole me she had anything else, an' we went on our bridal tower happy es larks, an' uv all my wives, thinks I, dis am de jewell. Her name was Marinet, an' she was de fines' 'oman I ever spliced up wid. Wal, sah, when we come back—Lord, boss, it was awful—ernudder cocktail to brace me up—ah! thankee—wal, when we come home an' I looked out I thou't de deestrick skule was gwine on in my yard—it was

liter'lly lined wid niggers. Dey was so thick dat whoever focht 'em cuden't git 'em all in de house an' had put some on 'em in de chicken coop an' hen-house. Leastwise, dey was dar, an' I gin 'em de bennyfit uv de doubt, altho' it mout er bin instinct.

" 'What's all dat?" sez I to de widder, gaspin' for my breath.

" 'Oh, dat's our dear chillun dat have come home!' an' wid dat she jumped out an' sech er kissin' an' huggin' you never seed. It look lak de yard wus full uv leetle mushrooms sprung up in de night.

" 'Jes' er leetle sprize for you, dear Luv, jes' er leetle sprize. Ain't dey too sweet fur eny thing? Uv course I didn't tell you 'bout it—thou't I'd sprize you!' an' den she kissed me so grateful lak.'

" 'Wal, you's done it,' sez I, pantin' fur breath—'not one, but whut I'd call er covey uv sprizes—an' you right sho' dey ain't none uv 'em wandered off? I shudn't lak for any mo' to bob up unexpected—I mout not be able to stan' de shock.'

" 'Oh, no,' she sez, 'dey am all heah. Come, chillun, an' kiss yo' Paw.'

"Wid dat dey piled on me, all on 'em wanted to kiss dey Paw, an' all at once. I wus smothered in er sea uv black an' ole gold, an' throwed up on er beach uv wet lips. Dey piled on me till I wus purple. You'd er thort I wus de football's haf-back wid all de yuhders on top. Some uv de gals wus nigh grown an' right peart, an' I don't mind dey huggin' me so much, but some wan't even weaned—dat is, dey didn't 'pear ter smell lak dey wus! Den she kiss me erg'in and sed:

" 'See how I luves yo' Paw? Dat's de way I wants you all to luve him.'

" 'We all luves our Paw now,' dey yells, an' wid dat dey kivered me ergain.

"At de supper table whilst dey made holes in de batter-cakes, biskets an' bac'n, I larnt all de names. De widder was literary an' had got 'em all outen books. Startin' wid de bigger gals, dar was Milcah an' Hosannah an' Sillawasha, an' Cokeette an' five or six mo' gals, endin' wid Rowena de leettle's one. De boys was Chauncey DePew, an' Plowden Van Bibber, an' Micajah Somerset an' Russell an' yudders an' all on 'em wus eatin' bac'n lak er sausage mill.

" 'Dey are sech healthy, happy, jolly dears,' sez she, 'wid so much pussonality. What er sponserbility Gawd puts on parents—what er problem!'

"For onct de widder had struck de key note uv my thorts—de problem wid me was how long my cobn an' yaller chickens 'ud last.

"Wal, sah, you nurver seed chillun luve dey Paw lak dey did me fur erbout er week. When bedtime come all de leetle ones wanted to sleep wid dey Paw. We put down comforts all over de house an' den had to put five kids in de bed wid us. It was tar'bul. Oh, yes, boss, some mo' uv dat cocktail—ever time I'd move I'd stick my toe in er coon's mouth, ever time I'd turn over I'd mash one. An' what you reckin dat chap ud do—squall out an' bite me, boss. It seems lake dey been tort when dey got mad to bite. I soon larned dey was spiled an' had other tricks lak yaller dogs sides bitin', and dat week was tar'bul. Dey didn't do

nuffin but dress up an' eat an' git mad an' bite one nur'r. Dey had no notion uv wuckin'. Dey objec' in life seems to be to see how quick dey cu'd eat up all I had. De widder was jes' es bad, an' spent all her time dressin' 'em up. I spent my days calk'latin' how long it ud be befo' dey would eat up my cohn, an' my nights tryin' to keep from bein' et up myse'f. I'd lay wake and heah 'em talkin' in dey sleep bout de poultry bizness, an' snorin', and den I'd gaze way off through de winder an' look at de stars, an' ever' bunch uv 'em ud be thirteen. Den I groan an' count de chilluns, an' dey 'ud be thirteen! It was tar'bul'. Yes —anur'r leetle drap outen dat bottle. Thankee.

"But I wus mighty pashent fur er week tryin' to lead 'em in de straight an' narrer path. It wa'nt no use—dey luve fur dey Paw didn't go beyond de cohn-crib or de hen house.

"Den dey all got sassy an' sassed me. I stood it till they begin to call me old niggah Methusalem—kase I was ole an' black an' dey was yaller, an' 'sineratin' dat I couldn't whip er kitten! I seed de time was ripe fur action, an' dat night I acted. I hid er good rawhide hosswhip under de bed an' by it I put er copperlined washboa'd wid er extry strong handle. Arter supper I got 'em all in de settin'-room an' locked de door an' put de key in my pocket.

" 'What's you gwinter do?' say de widder.

" 'We're all gwinter have fam'bly prayers,' sez I; 'bein, es I am er deacon in de Baptis' Church, an' I's kinder neglected it uv late.'

" 'Oh, rats,' sez all on 'em at onct.

"Den sez I, sorter calm lak: 'I's gwinter break all dese colts over to harness. Dey don't seem ter wanter pull on er cold collar, an' dey balk an' have got wheels in dey haids—'

"She riz up mad as er hornet: 'Dey ain't got enything in dey haids,' she sez. 'I thank you 'I take keer uv my chillun!'

" 'After I break 'em over ergin', sez I, 'I's gwinter baptize 'em all in Bigby Creek nex' Sunday.'

" 'Not much,' sez de widder, 'we is 'Piscopaliums.'

" 'Yes, we is 'Piscopaliums, ole nigger,' sez all on 'em.

" 'Wal, you'll be Baptis' when I get through wid you,' I sez, an' I grabbed my rawhide an' let in.

"De widder come at me lak er wildcat, but I hadn't put de washboa'd dar fur nuffin, an' I laid her out de fust lick—jes' had to do it, boss—had to do it. Der is times when er man has got to lick his wife, but he orter do it gently, lak I did. I seed her tumble over on de bed in er dead faint, but I knowed she had plenty uv wool an' er mighty hard haid whar I hit, an' she'd be through ergin by daylight.

"Wal, wid de old bird knocked out, dis jes' par'lyzed de covey, an' I frailed 'em out from Milcah to Rowena. I had 'em on de mourners' bench—I had 'em beggin' to be led to de creek, I had 'em meek es lambs an' settin' 'round quiet an' humble. Den I bathed de widder's face till she come through an' sot up, humble lak, and full uv penertence.

" 'Whut-whut-whut's happen?'" she sez.

" 'Nothin', Maw,' sez Milcah, sweet lak. 'Paw he's jes' made us all Baptis.'

" 'An' dat ain't all,' I sez. 'I been studyin' yo' names an' I's gwinter see whut yo' Maw intended you all to be when she named you all dem hifolutin'names.

" 'Whut yo' name, gal?' I sez.

" 'Milcah, sah!'

" 'Wal,' sez I, 'I studied dat out. You'll find it in de Bible. It's jes' Hebrew fer plain ole milker, an' you go to de cow barn de fust thing at daybreak', sez I. 'You maw is sho' er genius fur gettin' de right name.'

" 'Yas, sir, Paw,' she sez.

" 'What's yo' name, nex'?'

" 'Hosannah, sah.'

" 'Dat,' sez I didn't take much study. Hose is stockins an' Annah is plain ole Hannah, an' it means Hannah darnin' stockins. Go at it at onct. I'll let you be de seamstress fur dis house, too, an' frum now on yo' name is Hannah.'

" 'Yassir, Paw.'

" 'Whut's yo' name, nex'?'

" 'Cokette, sah.'

" 'Dat's French fer cookin',' sez I. 'You git into dat kitchen by daybreak' Yo' maw is er genius fur names.'

" 'Yassir, Paw.'

" 'Whut's yo' name, gal?'

" 'Sillawasha, sah.'

" 'Oh,' sez I, 'dat's dead easy. It looks Latin, but it's plain English. Anybody cu'd see dat Gawd intended you fer de wash tub.

" 'Yassir, Paw.'

Den I turns to de big, strappin' boys. 'What's yo' name, sah?'

" 'Plowden Van Bibber, sah.'

" 'Dat's Dutch,' sez I, 'but mighty plain to er man dat knows de langwedge lak yo' Paw does. Plowden mean plowin', an' Van Bibber is Dutch fur down by de river. It seems providential dat yo' name fits dat river bottom fiel' so handy! All you need is er mule an' plow an' you'll fin' 'em in de barn at daylight. Git at it.'

" 'Yassir, Paw.'

" 'What's yo' name, sonny?'

" 'Micajah Somerset, sah!'

"Dat,' sez I, 'would puzzle enybody but er scholar. Micajah is Greek for Mek-hay-sah, an' Somerset is ole Saxon fur befo' de sun set. Dat clover field needs you bad, an' yo' name fits it to er nat's heel!'

" 'Yassir, Paw.'

" 'Russell is mine, sah,' sed de nex' one—er black kid. 'Whut's dat fur?'

" 'Dat's jes' plain nigger for hustle,' sez I, 'an' you can start in de cohnfield to-morrow. An' ef you belie yo' name you'll ketch dis rawhide ergain'.'

" 'Yassir, boss.'

" 'Chauncey DePew, sah, at yo' sarvice!'

" 'Now,' sez I, 'Chauncey, you may think yo' was cut out fur makin' after-dinner speeches an' borryin' frenzied finance frum yo'self in de Equitabul, but frum now on de great pi'nt wid you is to fust earn yo' dinner. Chauncey is de Saxon fur Churnin'—you'll be mighty handy in de dairy. De rest uv yo' name suggests dat

de Baptis' church needs cleanin' up twice er week, arter prayer meetin' an' Sunday sarvice, an' I jes' let you tek care uv de pews.'

"Oh, I had 'em all fixed. Do leetle 'un climbed in my lap an' de widder sed, sorter mean lak: 'Dat's Rowena—you sho' done figur out whut her name mean?'

" 'Yes,' sez I—still holdin' er good grip on de wash-boa'd—'Ro is de Greek for time—an' de rest is easy: Time-to-ween 'er. I's gwinter sleep in peace to-night,' sez I.'

" 'Oh,' she sez, still sassy lak—'an' my name is Marinet—maybe you think it means somethin'.'

" 'I do,' sez I, 'you got er good home an' er good husban' an' father for you' children, but Marinet is de French fur er marryin'-yet, an' ef you don't walk er chalk-line frum now on, dat's whut you'll be doin'—er wife without er job—unless you can fool some other nigger. An' sence we're all Baptis' we'll now have prayer,' an' Boss, you never heard sech h'art-felt petestions es they put up.

"Boss, you nurver seed enything wuck lak it did. I put 'em to wuck an' kep 'em at it, an' sech craps as we made. Every one uv 'em mor'n paid fur hisse'f an' I got mo' money in de bank den we can spen'. I's allers wanted to own er few niggers an' now I's makin' it pay. Dat's why I go in style. It seems to me I's solved de nigger problem."

"How?" I asked.

"Wy, jes' keep 'em busy—keep 'em busy—dat's de p'int.

"But I must go—come to see me an' fetch nothin' but yo' appetite."

"Wash, let us test this club cocktail before you go. Here's to you—why, old man, you've drunk up your gift."

"To be sho'—to be sho.' Didn't you set dar an' see me do it? Ain't I done tole you offen to be lib'ral an' give, but ef you're smart, you'll fix yo' triggers so you'll more'n git it back erg'in?"

At the door I heard him say: "Step lively, you niggers! You's got to kill hogs when you git home!"

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